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28-PAGE BROADSHEET REVIEW

48-PAGE MAGAZINE

HYPNOSIS AT THE HIGH COURT

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LIFE AT THE CUTTING HEDGE

PLUS SHOPPING OUTDOORS, TRAVEL

ROBERT CAPA: BRITAIN IN THE BLITZ

COVER STORY

Greenpeace tried to buy Russian nuclear bomb

GREENPEACE OFFERED a Red Army officer \$250,000 to snatch a nuclear warhead from a Soviet-controlled bunker inside East Germany.

According to senior current and former members of Greenpeace, campaigners came "within weeks" of taking delivery of the weapon in a secret mission codenamed Operation Loose Cannon.

Planning for the exercise, in the summer of 1991, was well

BY STEVE BOGGAN

advanced when the Russian officer vanished. The bomb was to have been unveiled to the media to emphasise the dangers of "loose nukes" - devices being "lost" as the former Soviet Union disintegrated.

When the officer disappeared, Greenpeace decided not to publicise the operation. However, following inquiries in Sweden, the Netherlands,

America, England and the Arctic by the *Independent*, several officials have spoken about the affair for the first time.

"It would have been the biggest nuclear event since Hiroshima," said William Arkin, the former head of Greenpeace's Disarmament Research Unit. "We planned to line up a scientific team to verify the bomb's authenticity, and then we were going to unveil it in front of the world's media to

show that loose nukes were a problem, that disarmament was necessary and that controls on existing weapons need to be tightened up.

"Then we were going to say to the Russians: 'Here's your bomb. Come and get it.'

Mr Arkin, a former US Army intelligence officer and the author of several seminal works on nuclear proliferation and disarmament, ran the operation on the ground and held three

clandestine meetings with the Russian officer. He told the *Independent* that he promised the lieutenant, who was based at Altengrabow, south-west of Berlin, safe passage to Sweden and \$250,000.

The operation and the payment were authorised by Steve Sawyer, the then executive director of Greenpeace International, and the organisation's chairman, David McTaggart, but it was kept from the Green-

peace board to protect its members from charges should anything go wrong.

"There were two obvious primary concerns: making sure the thing was totally disarmed, and making sure our people didn't get killed," said Mr Sawyer.

"It was an opportunity to make an enormously powerful statement about the danger to the world from existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons in the

hands of a disintegrating Soviet Union.

"The general laxity and euphoria surrounding the collapse of the Cold War order had an extraordinarily frightening dark underside which didn't get a huge amount of attention, and very little action. Who knows what role the leaks and transfers during that period played in the ongoing spread of weapons technology around the world?"

British military intelligence sources have confirmed that warheads for Russian SS21 missiles were stored at Altegrabow, but they were sceptical that a senior lieutenant - and two soldiers he intended to enlist into the enterprise - could have breached security.

One suggested the operation might have been an elaborate plan to flush out a traitor from the Soviet ranks.

Battle over museum charges

BY DAVID LISTER
Arts News Editor

ADMISSION TO all national museums and galleries is to be free within three years as part of a "new era" for culture announced yesterday by Chris Smith, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

However, it appeared last night that free admission might be opposed by some of the national museums.

The Government's commitment to free admission, for which the *Independent* and *Independent on Sunday* have campaigned over the past 12 months, comes as part of a rethink of arts funding following the extra £290m Mr Smith won from the Treasury in the current public spending round.

Mr Smith is believed to have persuaded Tony Blair and Gordon Brown that free admission to museums met two of the Government's priorities: ex-

hibition to encourage all national museums to be free. This can be taken to mean that they would not get a share of the extra cash if they do not scrap charges. Other national museums that charge include the Victoria & Albert, National Maritime and National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside. The National Gallery, National Portrait Gallery, Tate Gallery and British Museum are already free.

In a separate announcement, Mr Smith gave the first guarantee that the present "good causes", arts, heritage, sport and charities, will continue to benefit from the National Lottery by £200m-£250m each after the year 2001.

Also as part of the spending plans, £125m of extra money over three years is to go into the performing arts - a 15 per cent increase. But the extra spending detailed by Mr Smith yesterday comes with a quid pro quo. All institutions, museums and performing arts companies will have to prove themselves to be efficient and to be attracting new audiences, he said. He is setting up a new watchdog body to monitor the efficiency of the funding bodies and the individual institutions.

"This is a new start for Britain's cultural, heritage and sporting world," Mr Smith said. "I want to put in place a new contract. We are investing and providing stability. It's now up to you to use the money effectively."

He also gave the first indication of changes to arts, tourism and sports funding bodies. The Museums and Galleries Commission faces a merger with the Library and Information Commission. The Arts Council is likely to merge with the Crafts Council to give more of a voice to the visual and plastic arts.

But the most radical reforms have been proposed in the field of film, where the British Film Institute will "cease to exist" and its work together with that of British Screen, the British Film Commission and the Arts Council's lottery funding will come under one Film Council.

teaching educational opportunities and widening access to the arts. He said yesterday that £100m of the new money would be earmarked to guarantee free admission at all national museums, including the five that charge at present. Children would go in free next year; pensioners the year after; and by 2001 there would be universal free admission.

However decisions to scrap charges rest with the trustees of individual museums. The Natural History Museum, the Science Museum and the Imperial War Museum have all expressed satisfaction with charging in the past.

Last night Neil Chalmers, director of the Natural History Museum, signalled that Mr Smith's initiative might not command widespread support. "We have not asked for this. There are advantages to charging. We have charged for 11 years. We have record attendances. And charging has meant we have had to be much more responsive to our visitors than we were before, because expectations are higher."

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FOREIGN NEWS

Keizo Obuchi, the "cold pizza" of Japanese politics, is the country's new Prime Minister

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BUSINESS

Nationwide announced raised interest rates, a day after a vote kept the building society mutual

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Justin Rose, 17, showed superb courage to bounce back with a 65 in the Dutch Open

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relations courses should be extended to all police officers, particularly those training to enter the CID.

Evidence summarised in the Home Office document paints an uncomfortable picture of the police role in race relations. Monitoring by the Crown Prosecution Service showed that just 37 per cent of cases which fell within the police definition of racial incidents were recorded as such by them, it said.

Figures from the British Crime Survey showed that just 49 per cent of victims of racially motivated crimes felt the police had showed enough interest.



Straw: CID race training
William will now move on to consider its wider implications.

In its paper, the Home Office said it would welcome his view on whether race and commu-

Sit-down turns race into a tour de farce

BY PAUL NEWMAN

WIDESPREAD in cycling, France has been shocked by the revelations. The influential daily newspaper *Le Monde* called for an end to this year's Tour. It said the race had become a meaningless contest that was preventing a proper investigation into the drugs issue.

The world's most famous cycling race was reduced to farce early in the day when the riders went on strike in protest at the way the drugs issue has overshadowed the event. The cyclists eventually agreed to race "out of respect for the public" lining the roads, but the drugs crisis deepened as three riders in the Festina team, which has been expelled from the race, confessed to taking banned substances.

Meanwhile police officers who raided the hotel rooms of the Dutch-based TVM team found evidence of doping products and masking agents. The team's sporting director and doctor were held for questioning by police and race organisers said they would expel TVM if wrongdoing was proved.

Although there have long been fears that drug-taking is

One of those who confessed, Armin Meier of Switzerland, said: "Yes, I said that I had taken EPO, how I took it and why I took it. I'm just the victim of a system. I feel that we are being victimised. It is like being on a motorway and everyone is doing 100km per hour when the speed limit is 90 km per hour but only the Festina riders have been punished."

Sport, page 26



Riders at the start of the 12th stage of the Tour de France protesting at 'the lack of respect' shown to them and the press coverage concentrating on the doping affairs instead of the racing

Peter Dejong/AP

Home Office says racist police should be re-educated

BY FRAN ABRAMS
Political Correspondent

ALL POLICE officers could be asked to take race relations courses, the Home Office suggested yesterday in its evidence for the next stage of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry. Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, has asked the inquiry to look at whether such training should be central, particularly for CID officers.

The evidence set out the Government's approach to community relations as the Lawrence inquiry, headed by Sir William Macpherson, prepared to enter its second phase.

After taking evidence from the main players in the case Sir

racial crimes were often dissatisfied with the way police handled their cases.

Panels set up by police and other organisations to deal with racial incidents had ground to a halt, the department's evidence said.

The proportion of ethnic minority police officers in many areas was still tiny, according to the report.

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HOME NEWS

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Newcastle reappoints directors

Two disgraced directors of Newcastle United Football Club were yesterday restored to the board just four months after they were forced to resign. Freddie Shepherd and Douglas Hall had been pilloried after insulting the club's fans and players, and women from the North-east generally. The news disappointed the City. Analysts accused the club's parent company of failing to match the rigours expected of a public limited company.

Page 5

MPs prepare to pack their bags

With a week to go before they pack their suntan lotion and Jeffrey Archer bestsellers, ministers and MPs are finalising plans for their long summer holidays. Next Friday is the last day of this session. But as one might have suspected of an increasingly dull and regimented Parliament, by and large MPs' choices are pretty uninspiring and a quick straw-poll suggests our leading politicians have quite restrained tastes.

Page 7

FOREIGN NEWS

PAGES 12-16

Angola predicts return to war

The Angolan government has accused Unita, the rebel movement led by Dr Jonas Savimbi of abandoning the country's peace process and has publicly predicted an imminent "return to war". Angola's National Assembly this week passed a resolution declaring that Dr Savimbi had broken the 1994 Lusaka Protocol, the United Nations-brokered peace agreement which ended 20 years ago of fighting between the two sides.

Page 14

BBC gives Afghanistan a soap hit

Ambridge it is not. Three times a week the 120 characters of *New Home New Life* - Afghanistan's hit soap opera - have to face mine explosions, rocket attacks, epidemics, earthquakes, murderous blood feuds and the sheer unending drudgery of scraping a living in one of the poorest, and most violent, countries in the world. Their hair-raising daily routine comes courtesy of BBC World Service Radio who, assisted by the Department for International Development and a range of international aid organisations, broadcast the drama throughout Afghanistan and western Pakistan to an audience estimated at between five and fifteen million.

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BUSINESS NEWS

PAGES 17-19

Wessex Water agrees takeover

Britain's privatised water utility sector was braced for a wave of corporate action yesterday after Wessex Water agreed a surprise £1.4bn takeover by Enron Corporation, an American energy group based in Houston, Texas. The deal is the first move into the UK water market by an American player, and comes three years after the US invasion of the UK electricity market.

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SPORTS NEWS

PAGES 20-23

Yorke move to United in doubt

The transfer of Dwight Yorke from Aston Villa to Manchester United for £7m plus Andy Cole is in doubt after John Gregory, the Villa manager, insisted he was yet to receive an official bid for the striker.

Page 21

Mansell drives Coulthard on

A pep talk by Nigel Mansell encouraged Britain's David Coulthard to record the fastest time in practice for tomorrow's Austrian Grand Prix. The former world champion assured Coulthard that "his time would come" after the McLaren driver had admitted he had almost no chance of winning this year's Formula One championship.

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WEEKEND REVIEW

28-PAGE BROADSHEET SECTION

Fergal Keane

"The proper journalistic role of the correspondent has been downgraded to a frightening degree. Stick a famous face on to the work of others, and you have guaranteed box-office success."

Page 3

David Usborne

"It may, indeed, be true that when she asked Rupert Murdoch for a separation in April, Anna was calling his bluff. And it may be also the case that only then did she realise that she had miscalculated."

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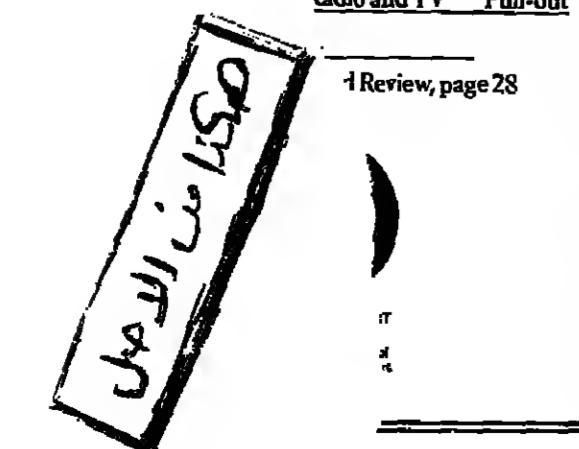
Howard Jacobson

"Women! They steal your tapas, they uncover your nakedness, and they laugh. Only apes and sparrows have so little sense of sin."

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Sir Brian Mawhinney (left), a former Conservative Party chairman, and John Major, the former party leader, enjoying a glass of beer while watching a match at Alconbury cricket club, near Huntingdon, to raise funds for the mental health charity Mencap Brian Harris

Danger blood protein to stay on sale

By JEREMY LAURANCE
Health Editor

A BLOOD product believed to be causing hundreds of deaths among critically ill patients each year will remain on sale for the time being, the Department of Health said yesterday.

An expert group set up by the Medicines Control Agency to examine claims that human albumin given to treat burns and shock may increase the risk of death in critically ill patients said that more information was needed before the product was withdrawn.

Human albumin is given to about 100,000 patients a year, usually to replace fluid lost as a result of injury or disease, of whom an estimated one in ten is critically ill. A review of 30 trials of the use of the blood protein in critically ill patients published in the *British Medical Journal* showed it increased the risk of death by 6 per cent, implying that it causes about 600 extra deaths a year compared with saline - salt solution.

Dr Ian Roberts, of the Cochrane Injuries Group at the Institute of Child Health in London, who led the study, said that albumin should no longer be used outside rigorously controlled trials. "We systematically searched for all the evidence and the overview looks bad. If the Medicines Control Agency says it can continue to be used in critically ill patients it has got to find the evidence that it is good. We couldn't."

Dr Roberts added: "I wouldn't want it used on me if I were critically ill."

A possible reason why albumin harms patients is that it can leak out of the capillaries into the spaces between the cells. It draws water with it, making the tissues soggy and if this happens in the lungs it may cause breathing problems. A second theory is that administering albumin could cause "circulatory overload", putting a strain on the heart.

However, they have so far failed in their attempt to introduce the necessary amendments to the Northern Ireland Bill, now being debated by Parliament.

Pressure builds on Sinn Fein over killing

THE GOVERNMENT faced new demands yesterday for Sinn Fein to be banned from taking up ministerial posts in the Northern Ireland Assembly after the police linked the Provisional IRA to a murder in Belfast.

The calls from Unionist and Conservative politicians followed statements from the Royal Ulster Constabulary over the death last weekend of 33-year-old Andy Kearney.

He had been dragged from his home in the nationalist New Lodge in front of his partner and two-week-old baby. The attackers ripped out telephone lines preventing an ambulance from being called in time. Mr Kearney bled to death after being shot in both legs.

BY KIM SENGUPTA

Republican sources claimed he was the target of a paramilitary punishment squad but his family, who blame the IRA for the death, maintained he was the victim of a murderous personal grudge.

Unionists and Tories claimed the killing was an example of why Sinn Fein should not be allowed to become part of the new executive. Andrew Mackay, the Opposition spokesman on Northern Ireland, said: "Sinn Fein-IRA members of the Assembly are not fit to be appointed ministers. You cannot hold ministerial office in one hand and an Armalite in the other."

"I hope the Government will now further strengthen the legislation to make sure they are excluded from ministerial office in all its form, and start co-operating with the decommissioning commission."

John Taylor, deputy leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, said: "We will have a situation where an organisation is serving in the government of a country and at the same time it is our killing people. We have a Bill which is quite weak and does not reflect the Belfast Agreement."

The Rev Ian Paisley, whose Democratic Unionist Party had campaigned against the current peace accord, said the fact that the police have linked the IRA to Mr Kearney's mur-

der means that the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mo Mowlam, should ban Sinn Fein from the Assembly.

He said: "She should say that it's clear that IRA-Sinn Fein are inextricably linked and they are still engaging in acts of violence, therefore they can't go forward and take their seats on the executive."

Sinn Fein's Alex Maskey rejected claims that there had been a breach of the Belfast Agreement, and insisted the IRA ceasefire was holding.

He added: "We are continuing to pursue our peace strategy regardless of what the RUC do or say. As far as we are concerned the IRA remains strongly committed to its peace

strategy and we have no evidence to suggest otherwise. Sinn Fein is answerable to nobody, only those who elected us."

Punishment shootings and beatings by both loyalist and republican paramilitaries have continued in Northern Ireland despite the current ceasefire.

The Tories and the Unionists believe that the political arms of the paramilitary groups involved in the attacks should be barred by statute from the executive.

However, they have so far failed in their attempt to introduce the necessary amendments to the Northern Ireland Bill, now being debated by Parliament.

Mandarins criticised over arms-to-Africa

CIVIL SERVANTS in the Foreign Office have been criticised by Sir Thomas Legg in his report into the "arms-to-Africa" affair.

BY ANDREW BUNCOMBE AND FRAN ABRAMS

ly to lead to some sort of reprisal for some officials.

"Basically he thinks there was a break-down in communication," said a Whitehall source. "There is no criticism that there was any collusion, but he feels information was not passed on properly and given even prominence."

Sir Thomas's inquiry was launched last May after revelations of a series of embarrassing links between the FCO

and Sandline over an operation to restore the ousted president of Sierra Leone, Ahmad Tejan Kabba.

Sandline, headed by Tim Spicer, provided arms and expertise to help President Kabba. Mr Spicer, a former Army officer, claimed he had acted with government approval. The Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, said they had never been any ministerial approval.

Five officials within the FCO gave evidence to the inquiry. It is understood they will all dispute they did anything wrong.

Training will be delivered via Training and Enterprise Councils, but the powerful House of Commons Public Accounts Committee attacked their record of financial control.

Despite previous promises to

tighten up procedures, TECs were still spending millions sub-contracting training without adequate checks on whether it was delivered. MP's said.

In 1996-97, they said, estimated over-payments to TECs - for training which was inadequate, never happened or could not be verified - rose by £6m to a total of £14.6m.

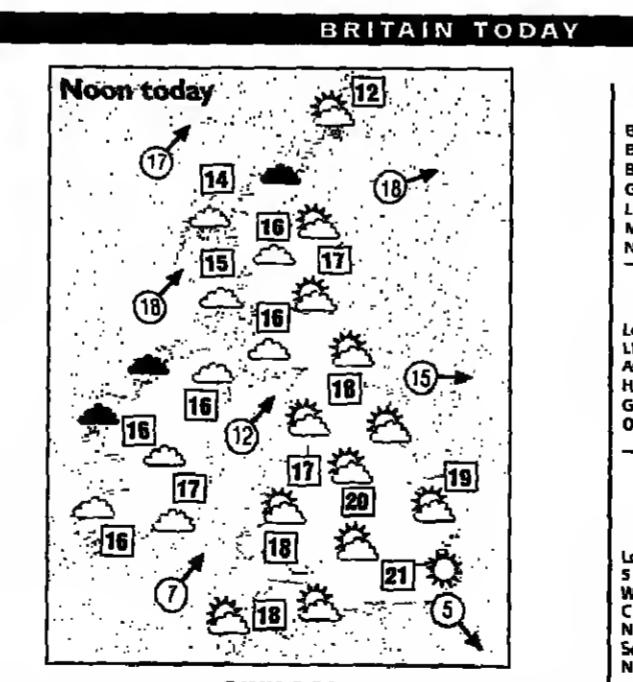
More than 70 cases of irregular payments had been recorded since 1995 and 35 were still under investigation involving 16 TECs.

In most cases, irregularities involved "deficiencies" in assessments for National Vocational Qualifications, the work-based qualifications which will lie at the heart of the New Deal.

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England and Wales will be bright and warm with some sunny spells, although there will be a partial build up of cloud during the day, and north-west England may turn more overcast by evening. Northern Ireland will start dry and bright, but patchy rain will spread slowly from the west this afternoon. Eastern Scotland will be mainly dry with some hazy sunshine, but showers are possible late on. Western Scotland will be largely cloudy with local drizzle giving way to heavier rain by evening.

NEXT FEW DAYS

Tomorrow will be unsettled with showers and some longer spells of rain in many places, although south-east England and East Anglia will be bright and warm for much of the day with showers not developing until evening. The first half of next week will be changeable with a fair amount of cloud and further showers, although there will be some spells of warm sunshine. Temperatures will be around the normal for late July.

SUN & MOON

Sun rises:	05:14
Sun sets:	21:00
Moon rises:	07:20
Moon sets:	21:53
First Quarter:	31st July

For the latest forecasts call 0891 5009 followed by the two digits for your area, indicated by the small right-hand figure. Source: The Met. Office. Calls charged at 50p per min (inc VAT).

WEATHERLINE

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Danger
blood
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THE INDEPENDENT
Saturday 25 July 1998

Heroin scandal rocks London's devout Jewish community

BY PAUL LASHMAR

THE ORTHODOX Jewish community has been shocked by a series of arrests of its members for alleged heroin smuggling. Police and Customs inquiries are centring on a drugs link between Israel, Antwerp and London.

Evidence of the new drugs link follows:

Two Jewish men are to appear British courts on heroin smuggling charges.

The professional execution on an Antwerp street last week of a Jewish jeweller and leading figure in the Russian Mafia.

A Talmudic scholar accused in Tel Aviv this month of laundering drugs money through his bank account.

The north London Orthodox community is remaining tight-lipped about the arrests although it is thought to be severely embarrassed.

Several people in the community, who did not want to be named, said that the arrests were causing anger and deep concern.

The involvement of Orthodox Jews in hard drugs has echoes of the recent case in New York State where the puritanical Amish sect was torn by the arrest of several younger members for drug dealing.

The Orthodox and ultra-orthodox communities of Stamford Hill and Golders Green in north London have a reputation for being largely crime-free. While some members of the Orthodox community have been jailed in the past for large-scale VAT frauds and other white collar crime, it has never been associated with drugs or violent crime. The fact the arrests involve allegations of heroin has proved even more shocking.

Police in several European countries began to suspect that the diamond area of Antwerp was becoming an international centre for drug smuggling two years ago when an Orthodox Jewish man from Antwerp was arrested at Ramsgate.

Dror Hazenfratz, then 34, from Antwerp, was jailed for 11 years for trying to smuggle heroin. He was arrested by British Customs officers while travelling with his wife and child in the family Peugeot 405.

Underneath the child seat in the back Customs officers found 15 kilos of heroin worth £750,000.

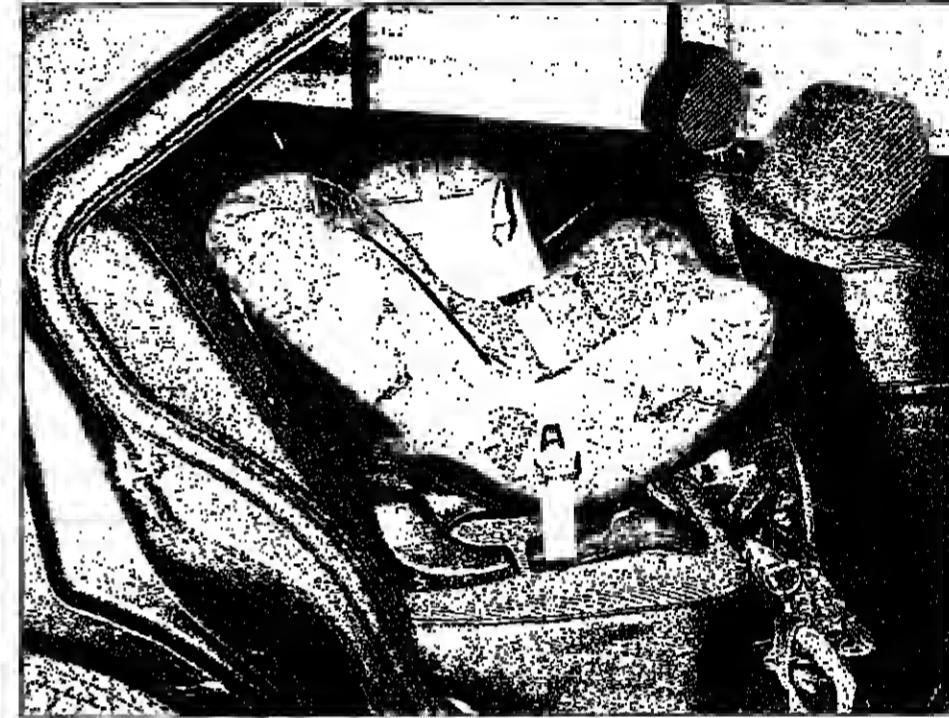
Hazenfratz, who was born in Haifa and holds an Israeli passport as well as a Belgian identity card, appeared in Canterbury court wearing traditional dress and carrying the Talmud. He had made other one-day trips to England.

Hazenfratz said he had been told to meet a Georgian Orthodox Jew at a north London hotel. The ultimate destination of the drugs was reputedly David Santini, a Glaswegian who, at the time, was Scotland's leading heroin dealer.

In an unrelated raid, Santini was arrested while repacking a £1.1m consignment of heroin. He was jailed for 13 years. A senior officer in the case said: "He had massive connections with Britain's underworld and leads to European drug cartels."

Following the arrest of Hazenfratz, drugs officers began to suspect a new drugs route. The last stopping point for most drugs coming into Britain is the Netherlands, but European police forces are making it more difficult to use that country as a transhipment point.

The collapse of Communism has also opened up new smuggling routes through Eastern Europe.



Aron Albam (left) appeared in court in Tel Aviv watched, it is said, by officers of the British intelligence services. He is accused of laundering money from an international drugs ring. The car (above) used by Dror Hazenfratz to smuggle heroin, which was concealed beneath his child's car seat. Main photograph: Eli Dassa

Europe into London and Antwerp is ideally suited as a drugs centre.

At the end of June British Customs arrested a 19-year-old man from Antwerp in Dover with 10 kilos of heroin allegedly concealed in his hire car. He is awaiting trial. Shortly before an older man had been arrested at Coquelles at the French entrance to the Channel Tunnel. British Customs allegedly found quantities of heroin and cocaine. The man was an American Orthodox Jew living in Stamford Hill.

British drugs officers suspect they are seeing the beginning of a new drug operation involving Antwerp's Orthodox Jews and the Russian Mafia. The Orthodox community has been a major player in the diamond and precious metal market. Antwerp has the largest diamond centre in the world. Other centres of the diamond business are Tel Aviv and Hatton Garden, London.

Antwerp's Orthodox community is close-knit but cosmopolitan with close links with similar communities in Israel, London, New York and Eastern Europe. It is an Ashkenazi community which originated mainly from East Europe. However, over the past two years the diamond business has taken a downturn for the small trader and the trade has moved mainly into the hands of big corporations such as DeBeers. In addition, last year, police made a series of raids of diamond

businesses suspected of tax evasion and money laundering.

According to one Customs source, smuggling diamonds from Antwerp to London's Hatton Garden has been on for many years. This expertise in smuggling has now been turned to a more sinister trade. The Russian Mafia has made Antwerp a centre of its operations and has been able to use the expertise of a community that has fallen on hard times.

Last week, evidence of the violence associated with drug crime surfaced again in Antwerp. A Jewish trader in precious metals in the city, Rachmeil "Mike" Brandwain, also reputed to be a leading figure in the Russian Mafia, was shot dead. Underworld gossip has it that he had informed on another leading figure in the Russian Mafia who had been arrested in New York.

In the 1980s Brandwain had sold gold that was smuggled into Britain for a VAT fraud being run in Hatton Garden. A Customs operation codenamed "Operation Fiddler" arrested a number of men in London. Brandwain was also suspected to be a cocaine dealer.

Earlier this month in Tel Aviv, three British drug officers were in court to see an Israeli man charged with laundering money from an international drugs ring.

According to local police, the British officers were from MI6 – the remit of the overseas arm of British intelligence was

extended to cover international drug smuggling.

Israel Aron Albam, a 38-year-old Talmudic scholar married with eight children, was released on a bail of 6m shekels (around £1.3m). The Tel Aviv court was told that British authorities had been involved with the seizure of two boatloads of drugs, the first in 1992 with two tonnes of cocaine and one tonne of cocaine.

The shipments originated from Columbia and were heading for Holland. The second boat was seized in Portugal and a British citizen known only as "John" was arrested. He claimed that Albam had given him £48,000 to pay for the yacht. The court was told that a number of men are held by the British authorities in connection with the smuggling ring.

Albam is an Ashkenazi of the large Vishnitz sect. Police inquiries revealed that Albam was on a Israeli government grant for poor scholars to study the Talmud at the Yeshiva (theology college). He had travelled to New York and London, apparently collecting money for charity. However, Israeli police found 400m shekels (£86m) in his bank account. The account was in the Israeli religious bank which is tax exempt.

Albam admitted that he ran a "private bank" but claims that he did the laundering only for the chareidim (the Orthodox). He has denied any connection with drugs dealings.



and Powell's later opposition to immigration, in particular his notorious "Rivers of Blood" speech in 1968, as hypocrisy.

The series' makers, Pepper Productions, which is run by independent columnist Trevor Phillips, were told before the programme went on air by two of Powell's biographers, including Simon Heffer of the *Daily Mail*, that the visit had never taken place.

The BBC says that because of a "misunderstanding" Mr Heffer's evidence about the non-existent trip was not followed up. However, after an investigation by the BBC the corporation has decided to air an apology at 8pm tonight. The

migration. The statements about Enoch Powell in the first two episodes were based on people's personal history of events. We believe that the two witnesses acted in good faith, however we now concede that there is no evidence to support what they said. We would like to apologise to Mr Powell's family for any distress caused."

Mr Heffer said: "The programme makers chose to ignore what Mr Shepherd (unofficial biographer of Powell) and I told them, and broadcast what turned out to be a tissue of lies. Only they know whether this was because what they learned did not fit with their prejudice about Powell."

BBC apology over 'Windrush'

BY PAUL McCANN
Media Editor

THE BBC is to make a humiliating apology to the family of Enoch Powell tonight after accusing the anti-immigration politician of hypocrisy in a documentary earlier this year. In the corporation's *Windrush* series, which commemorated 50 years of immigration to Britain from the former colonies, it alleged when he was a health minister, Powell had visited British Guiana (now Guyana) on a recruiting drive to encourage workers to join the National Health Service in the early Fifties.

The programme portrayed the contrast between this trip



and Powell's later opposition to immigration, in particular his notorious "Rivers of Blood" speech in 1968, as hypocrisy.

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Court relives the amazing world of Paul McKenna

PAUL MCKENNA is a hypnotist and former in-store entertainer who specialises in making people do silly things.

And if you need proof that the People's Hypnotist is a very powerful man indeed, you only need to be in Court Nine at the High Court yesterday, where Christopher Gates, a French polisher, is suing Mr McKenna for £200,000.

There men in fancy-dress wigs and gowns spoke in the strangest of tongues for hours on end. It was obvious to any outsider that they were in the grip of a force that they did not understand.

Take Mr McKenna's barrister, Roger Henderson. "I expect all of that I've just said are hau-tologies but the Sisyphus never got to the top of the hill!" he exploded at one point during his closing statement. No, he didn't and it looked as if Anthony Scrivener, for the plaintiff, might never get to the end of his statement either.

I use the word *statement* only because it seems polite to do so. In fact, it was more a series of thoughts plucked from the depths of a wildly coloured binder that he kept flipping through. Mr Scrivener told the judge he could have a typed version by Tuesday. Mr Justice Toulson did not look impressed.

For two weeks this court has been concerned with the case of Mr Gates, who says his schizophrenia was triggered by taking part in one of Mr McKenna's stage shows at High Wycombe in 1994.

If that sounds straightforward, little else has been, with the court delving into the most philosophical and personal of matters. At one point the judge had to retire to watch a video of one of Mr McKenna's shows

BY ANN TRENEGAN

in which a woman had an orgasm on stage, while a man (no relation) was persuaded that he had lost his penis. There was also another man (still no relation) who was convinced he had had a baby. Even the defence seemed to concede that Mr McKenna had caused distress to the wily man.

There are other kinds of distress, however, and yesterday saw a philosophical crisis as the court pondered whether there were hidden parts of the brain.

Also under scrutiny was this scenario: there is a piece of paper with the number eight on it that is shown to a man under hypnosis. He is told the paper is blank. When asked if the paper is blank, he says 'yes'.

Now the question is: was he telling the truth? Was the information stored in a hidden part of the brain? After a while, it became clear that the real answer was that we don't know.

The *Moral Maze* trigger or perhaps accelerate, the schizophrenia? That is the central question of the case. Mr Gates is suing for £200,000 but much more depends on the ruling, which will probably not be given until the autumn. A conclusion would be that stage hypnosis (and other forms of television shows involving active audience participation) would cease in this country," said Mr Henderson.

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Education: Review of a decade's research confirms that girls are outperforming boys at all levels of school

Macho attitudes key to boys failing

BOYS LAG behind girls at every stage of compulsory schooling partly because of a "macho culture", says a wide-ranging study published today.

But it also suggests that girl power has its limits and that gender stereotypes persist after the age of 16, when girls still tend to opt for the subjects their mothers studied.

Boys predominate in entries to A-level science and maths while girls choose English and modern languages.

The report from Cambridge University and Homerton College details how girls have outstripped boys at GCSE level, and reviews all the research over the past decade.

"Economic change has encouraged rather than discouraged the continued presence of disaffected macho lads," it argues. Working-class boys have responded to declining job prospects by valuing sex, fighting and football more highly than their studies, according to one of the studies reviewed.

Schools need to work hard to ensure that reading is not seen as a feminine activity, that boys have male role models and that young boys are offered non-fiction to read, according to the report's authors.

Madeleine Arnot, from Cam-

BY JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

bridge University's school of education, who led the research, said that girls are "increasingly positive about their futures and more flexible about how they perceive their future lives." However, the old stereotypes still hold after 16.

The report says that there is no simple explanation or solution for boys' difficulties.

Some GCSE questions may put boys at a disadvantage because they concentrate on characters' feelings and motivation, an area where girls tend to outshine boys.

Marking at GCSE level may also work to girls' advantage because it puts more emphasis on

the technical aspects of writing than on understanding the text, and the organisation, style, grammar and spelling of boys' answers tend to be weaker than that of the girls.

Although the big gap between boys and girls dates back to the introduction of GCSE, there is no evidence that it was caused by the change of exam system. Girls do slightly better at the coursework required for GCSE but boys appear to compensate for this in other parts of the exam.

Teachers may need to bear in mind how boys learn according to the research evidence. Girls do better on open-ended tasks related to real life that require them to think for themselves. Boys, by contrast, prefer exercises that require correct quick answers.

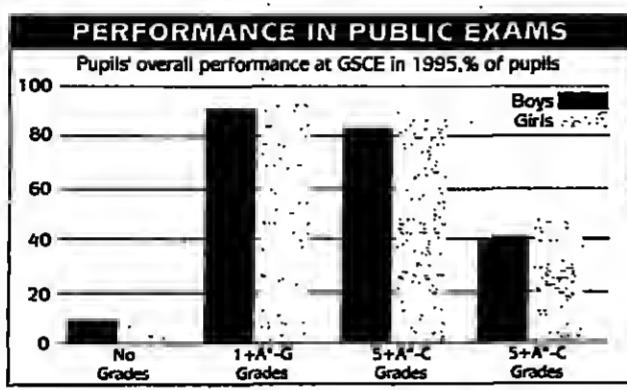
Overall, 48 per cent of girls now get five top grades at GCSE compared with 39 per cent of boys. At A-level, however, boys secure marginally more top grades.

In 1985 a fifth of girls stayed on for A-levels. Now the figure is almost two-fifths (38 per cent) compared with only 33 per cent for boys. However, girls continue to take traditional "female subjects" at A-level.

During the past decade, the gap between the number of male and female entries in physics, technology and economics has actually widened.

Ms Arnot suggested that schools should carefully monitor the relative performance of boys and girls and try to identify ways in which they could repeat with boys the success achieved with girls.

The schools minister Estelle Morris said that monitoring the underachievement of boys was a government priority. She said: "The report shows that there are many complex reasons, from the lack of male role models in primary education and often in the home, to the emphasis on good communication skills in schools – an area where girls often shine."



Sue Townsley, a part-time student, and Leeds MEP Michael McGowan at the launch of the study scheme. Joan Russell

University offers free courses to lone parents

BY JUDITH JUDD

LONE PARENTS and people who care for relatives are being offered a second career chance through free courses at the University of Leeds.

An initiative launched yesterday gives two years of free part-time study and paid expenses to unemployed or under-employed lone parents and carers who received a good education but have been unable to benefit from it because of their family commitments.

The aim of the scheme, called Optimise, is to help them back into a career in the pro-



fessions or business by providing tuition, work experience and careers advice.

Successful applicants, who must be aged 25 or over, will receive free tuition and the cost

of caring for dependants while they study.

Fifty undergraduate places will be available from this summer on the scheme which is being funded by a £50,000 grant from the European Social Fund.

Students will be entitled to study on one or more than 30 part-time programmes leading to a certificate, diploma or eventually a full degree.

Most are expected to opt for work-related courses such as Business Studies, Law, Social Studies, Applied Psychology or Medical Laboratory Sciences. They will have four weeks' work experience.

Italian mafia hits London art market

KEY FIGURES linked to the Italian Mafia are currently in London buying up works of art to launder money, according to an on-going police investigation.

The head of the Italian police art crime squad, General Roberto Conforti, said front-men linked to organised crime gangs had been spotted buying up items at leading auction houses.

"From the investigations we have on-going with a number of auction houses [in London] we have noticed high-value purchases from people who normally act as front-men for criminal syndicates where large amounts of money are used to buy works of art," he said.

"In these cases, of course, we are talking about legitimate works of art. It is an investment and a way of laundering money."

Italian police sources claim that while individuals could be arrested in Italy on suspicion of being linked to the Mafia, this was not the case in Britain. Police are also conscious of not simply arresting the middle man unless they can prove the links to the crime gangs.

One Italian police source involved in the current investigation said: "We know of certain large Mafia bosses who are involved in art transactions."

"They have studied British law very carefully and have managed to create a way to operate within it."

The presence of the Mafia in London is just one indication of the growing involvement of organised crime gangs in the art world. Police and experts believe criminals are increasingly using art – both legitimate

BY ANDREW BUNCOMBE
AND TOBY FOLLETT

criminals to operate within the art world. For instance, auction houses are only advised – and not forced – to inform the police when there are large cash transactions.

Last month the Council for the Prevention of Art Theft launched a voluntary code for art and auction houses to try and protect themselves against criminals.

Auction houses were advised to check the details of the items for sale and the details of the vendors, to inform police of any suspicious and to check items with the international database.

Philip Saunders, editor of the magazine *Trace*, which provides information about stolen and missing works of art, said: "Most criminals will make purchases through a third party who takes a nice cut for his work."

"That way it is much more difficult to trace the criminals involved. But I believe that criminals are increasingly knowledgeable about the art market."

Charles Hill, former head of the Metropolitan Police's art and antiques unit, said the art market was very attractive to criminals.

"It is cash-intensive and it is something of a trophy crime for crooks who have moved on from stealing hub caps," said Mr Hill, now a risk manager with Nordstern Art Services.

"But it is an area in which the crooks themselves can also fall prey. Often criminals buy fakes and forgeries from other criminals."

FERGAL KEANE

In the ratings war, truth is too often the first casualty

THE WEEKEND REVIEW, PAGE 3

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Right and left take the middle ground when it comes to choosing a holiday

BY ANDREW BUNCOMBE

BORING IN work and less than exciting on holiday. With a week to go before MPs pack their sun-tan lotion and Jeffrey Archer bestsellers, ministers and MPs are finalising plans for their long summer holidays.

Next Friday is the last day of this session. But as one might have suspected of an increasingly dull and regimented Parliament, by and large MPs' choices are pretty uninspiring and a quick straw poll suggests our leading politicians have quite restrained tastes.

The Tory leader, William Hague, and his wife, Fiona, might be embarking on a slightly unlikely white-water rafting trip to America. ("What if his sinusitis returns?") but the Treasury spokesman, Francis Maude, is content with a family holiday in France. ("We enjoy the food and the weather - all that sort of stuff.")

In fact, according to our slightly less than scientific survey, France is perhaps the favoured destination of the majority of MPs. The Home Secretary, Jack Straw, is travelling somewhere in the south (concern for security prevents any finer pin-pointing), while Paddy Ashdown will be spending three weeks with his family at the cottage he owns in Burgundy. His daughter, Kate, who married a Frenchman, is due to join them.

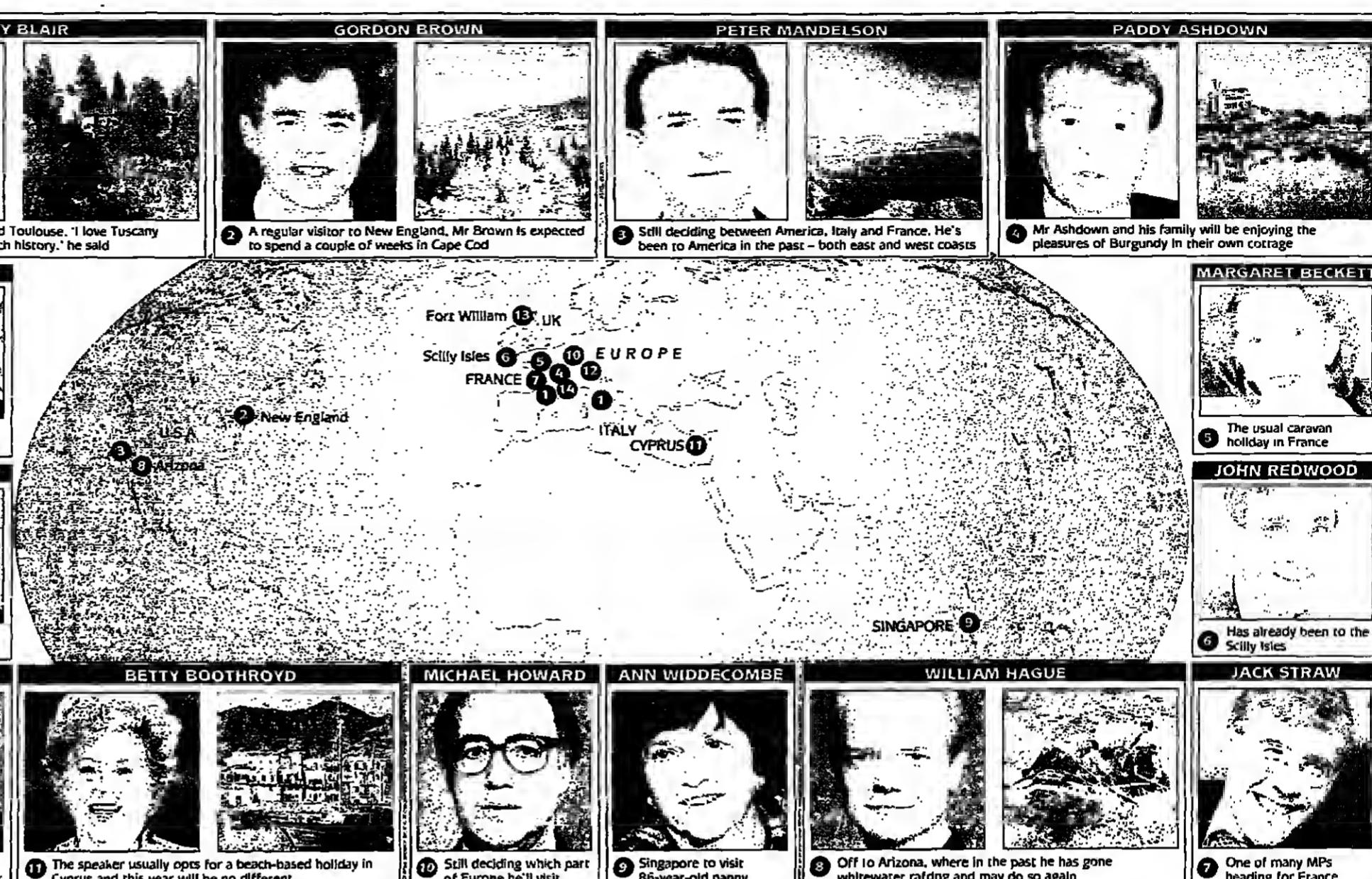
Plaid Cymru's leader, Dafydd Wigley, is renting a house in the south of France for a fortnight. The Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, and his wife, Gaynor, may also be spending some time in France.

"All I know is that they are going self-catering somewhere in Europe. Robin loves all the countries of the European Union equally," said an aide.

He will no doubt be hoping for a more relaxing holiday than he had last year when his planned trip to the United States, with his then wife, was terminated at Heathrow airport after he learnt that news of his affair with his researcher was about to break.

Even the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, is expected to spend a couple of weeks in France, staying at the Chateau St Martin D'Ydes, 40 minutes south of Toulouse. They are then to move on to Italy, staying at a 1,000-year-old Tuscan estate, owned by the Prince Girolamo Strozzi.

The estate is less than two miles from the villa owned by Geoffrey Robinson, but Mr Blair has apparently decided he ought not stay there, raising the prospect of the embattled Pay-



staying at the Chateau St Martin D'Ydes, 40 minutes south of Toulouse. They are then to move on to Italy, staying at a 1,000-year-old Tuscan estate, owned by the Prince Girolamo Strozzi.

The estate is less than two miles from the villa owned by Geoffrey Robinson, but Mr Blair has apparently decided he ought not stay there, raising the prospect of the embattled Pay-

master General could be a victim in next week's cabinet reshuffle.

Few MPs, however, will be following the example of Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, and her husband Leo, who will travel around France in a caravan. (A rather pleasant Champagne-class vehicle built by the Bristol company Baileys.)

"We travel about 130 miles

south of Paris and start touring around there, stopping off at the little villages and drinking the local plonk," said Mr Beckett. "It is simply such a nice change. We spend all the year here or else working in the constituency and it is so relaxing to go away. And yes, we do have a pretty good caravan. It's the sort that never lets you down."

Some are slightly more adventurous. The Chancellor,

Gordon Brown, and his girlfriend, Sarah Macauley, are due to be jetting off to Cape Cod in New England, while Peter Mandelson, Minister without Portfolio, is deciding whether his holiday destination will be America, France or Italy. The Speaker of the Commons, Betty Boothroyd, expects to go to Cyprus, her usual destination, where she swims, reads and, reportedly, paraglides.

In the mean-fisted stay-at-home stakes, the Liberal Democrat MP Charles Kennedy might take some beating. "He will be spending his holiday at his croft in Fort William," said his assistant. "He has a lot of work to do on it and he will be there with his family."

No MP, however, has yet matched the plans of Ann Widdecombe.

"I shall be going to Singapore to visit my 86-year-old Chinese nanny," she said, explaining that as a young girl she spent three years living in the city state between 1953 and 1956. "I hate the climate, but I love the food and I will make a five or six-day trip to Malaysia to do some swimming."

But won't she feel constrained by those strict laws

which stop people spitting, dropping litter or chewing gum in the street? "That's not going to bother a good Roman Catholic like me is it," she said.

Not everyone is so open about their planned vacations.

"Oh, no, sorry. I am not interested in that. Please ask someone else," snapped a rather stressed sounding Gillian Sheppard, the Conservative spokeswoman on the environment, transport and the regions. Poor Mrs Sheppard. Perhaps she needs a holiday.

Bishops deadlocked over gay Christians

BY CLARE GARNER



THE Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, has promised more meetings with lesbian and gay Christians after ending his seven-year refusal to have any dealings with them.

His appearance at a drinks reception hosted by the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement in Canterbury was perceived to reflect an unprecedented willingness on his part to hear the homosexual point of view.

However, African and Asian bishops yesterday made plain that they had no intention of making such overtures to homosexual Christians.

Homosexuals are to this year's Lambeth Conference what women were to the last one, in 1988. Debates about the ordination of practising homosexuals and the blessing of same-sex unions threaten to split the Anglican Communion.

Bishops from Africa and the Indian sub-continent see no reason why the subject should be discussed at all. They deny that homosexuality exists in their parts of the world and refused even to talk to gays. Many American and some British bishops take the opposite view, maintaining that to deny homosexuals equal rights

is unChristian. The two sides are refusing to compromise. The Bishop of Shyira, in Rwanda, the Rt Rev John Kabango Rucyahana, is reported to have written to Dr Carey calling on the Lambeth Conference to ban the Bishop of Newark, New Jersey, the Rt Rev John Spong, and more than 75 bishops who share his liberal view on homosexuality, from the Anglican Communion. According to the *Anglican Way* newspaper, copies of the bishop's letter have been distributed to the 37 primates at the conference.

Dr Carey's attendance at the LGCM drinks party at the County Hotel on Thursday night followed 48 hours of careful negotiations. The Rev Richard Kirker, general secretary of the LGCM, was delighted that at last there was a chance of dialogue. "Every year since he became Archbishop we have asked for a meeting," he said. "Our efforts to meet were always unsuccessful. This made us very frustrated and called into doubt his often stated position that he was prepared to talk to lesbians and gay people. The fact was that he

wouldn't talk to an organisation that represented them.

"I think he has now reached the point that it is untenable to keep his distance from us and he can see the merit in a face-to-face meeting. Last night's meeting was a prelude to that."

The Bishop of Tirunelveli, in South India, the Rt Rev Jason Dharman, was dismayed by Dr Carey's willingness to listen to the gay lobby. "I'm unhappy about this. I feel sorry for this. Homosexuality is the outcome of the modern world. It's

against the will of God." Bishop Dharman accused Dr Carey of being "political", saying: "He wants to be one with the people and that's not good. He must take a religious stand ... all the bishops from India, Pakistan and Ceylon are against it (homosexuality). We're just wondering why this is going on in the UK."

At the drinks party Dr Carey mingled with gay Christians and heard their "personal stories of hurt and the rejection they've experienced in church and the difficulty of proclaiming the Christian message in the lesbian and gay community because of all the hostility expressed towards them by the Church - not least by the Archbishop himself", said Mr Kirker.

The Bishop of Akure, in Nigeria, the Rt Rev Emmanuel Gbonig, said he could never do what Dr Carey had done.

"I won't listen to them, because it would be a sheer waste of time," he said.

"It's not because I'm a bigot but, as far as I'm concerned, it is against the word of God. Nothing - I repeat, nothing - can make us (African bishops) budge, because we view what God says as firm."

World Bank 'not to blame for debt'

BY CLARE GARNER

THE PRESIDENT of the World Bank, Jim Wolfensohn, yesterday condemned Christian Aid, which blamed the bank for contributing to international debt, as "neither fair or correct".

The 20-minute video, shown to bishops at the Lambeth Conference yesterday, contained repeated criticisms of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund from aid and charity workers, as well as first-hand accounts from Jamaicans and Tanzanians about what it is like to live

with the consequences of Third World debt. Mr Wolfensohn described the video as a "grave injustice". He told the bishops: "I'm not angry about the film. I care and so do my people. We try to make the world a better place."

Roger Williamson, director of Christian Aid, said afterwards that he was "flattered to be taken seriously" by the World Bank.

"The video is saying that what's happening at the mo-

ment is not enough. The World Bank is saying that 15 or 16 of the 41 highly indebted poor countries will begin to get debt relief by the year 2000.

"We're saying this is not enough in terms of the debt relief being offered and the number of countries included ... the proportions of the problem are enormous. We are losing the battle."

International debt was the only subject which every bishop at the Lambeth Conference, the 10-yearly gathering of Anglican bishops, agreed they

should address during the three weeks. The Archbishop of Cape Town, the Right Rev. Njongonku Ndungane, said that Third World debt is the modern equivalent of slavery. "We all live in the grip of an economy which encourages over-lending and over-borrowing, an economy which drives us relentlessly in to debt."

"But the poorest, those with

very little income to depend on, are not just in the grip of this economy. They are enslaved by it. They live in bondage to their creditors," he said.

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Pardons refused for war deserters

BY GARY FINN

MINISTERS HAVE refused to grant pardons for hundreds of British soldiers executed during the First World War for desertion and "cowardice".

Despite a greater understanding of the combat stress disorder known as "shell shock" and the apparent failings of the Army's wartime legal system, the Ministry of Defence has decided that to overturn findings of guilt after more than 80 years have passed would be impractical.

The decision, announced by the Armed Forces minister John Reid, follows a lengthy review of 306 executions. The ruling dismayed campaigners seeking pardons.

Mr Reid said that individual names may be considered for inclusion in books of remembrance and on war memorials, but some campaigners rejected that olive branch.

In a Commons statement Mr Reid expressed a "deep sense of regret" at the loss of life and announced that Parliament would be invited to abolish the death penalty for military offences in the armed forces - "in peace and in war".

He added: "The point is that now, 80 years after the events and on the basis of the evidence, we cannot distinguish between those who deliberately let down their country and their comrades in arms, and those who were not guilty of desertion or cowardice."

"If some men were found wanting, it was not because they all lacked courage, backbone or moral fibre. Among those executed were men who had bravely volunteered to serve their country. Many had

'JUSTICE' AS CRUEL AS WAR

They were executed for desertion and cowardice but 80 years later some of these decisions appear as ghastly and grotesque as the Great War itself.

■ Shell-shocked 19-year-old, Private George Roe of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, was executed for desertion, after getting lost. Pte Roe had even asked a policeman how to find his way back to his regiment.

■ Another 19-year-old, Pte James Archibald of the 17th Royal Scots, told his comrades he "felt queer" and fell asleep in a barn while en route to the trenches in May 1916. He was found the next day and killed by firing squad.

■ Pte Harry Farr, of the West Yorkshire Regiment, treated for five months for shell-shock, was returned to trenches. Four months later he again cracked up, was late for parade and executed for cowardice.

I believe that could happen".

Tom Stones, whose great uncle Joseph Stones was shot at dawn for "shamefully casting away his arms in the presence of the enemy", said he would continue to seek a pardon.

Sergeant Joseph Stones, of the 19 Durham Light Infantry, was on a patrol which was ambushed by a German raiding party and he jammed his rifle across the trench to stop the enemy advancing while he ran back to raise the alarm.

"This is a clear case of total injustice. I'm not giving up until I get a full pardon for him," Tom Stones said.

Lance Corporals Peter Goggins and John McDonald also ran back to British lines with

Sgt Stones on that day in November 1916. All three were executed together.

Mr Stones added: "I think it brings great shame on to the British army, not on to my uncle. It would cost them nothing to admit that they did a really bad thing."

Yesterday's announcement followed a campaign led by

Andrew Mackinlay, Labour MP for Thurrock in Essex. "This certainly closes a chapter on a very unhappy episode as we come to the end of a troubled century," he said. "We can at least take some pride that the ordinary British soldier and other victims of the Great War have been given acknowledgement which is long overdue."

A Royal British Legion spokesman said: "Legion members will be disappointed that a full pardon is not forthcoming since, as recently as last year, at its annual conference, they resolved that in the light of current medical evidence First World War service personnel executed for cowardice should be granted a pardon."

BY BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

TREASURY PLANS to clamp down on boardroom fat cats could be undermined by the Government's own plans to improve workers' employment rights.

As Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer, considers how to prevent huge pay rises for company directors, the Department of Trade and Industry is set to give a considerable but unintentional boost to highly paid executives who hop from company to company.

Top directors are expected to be the main beneficiaries of a plan to lift the restriction on compensation for unfair dismissal, it is pointed out.

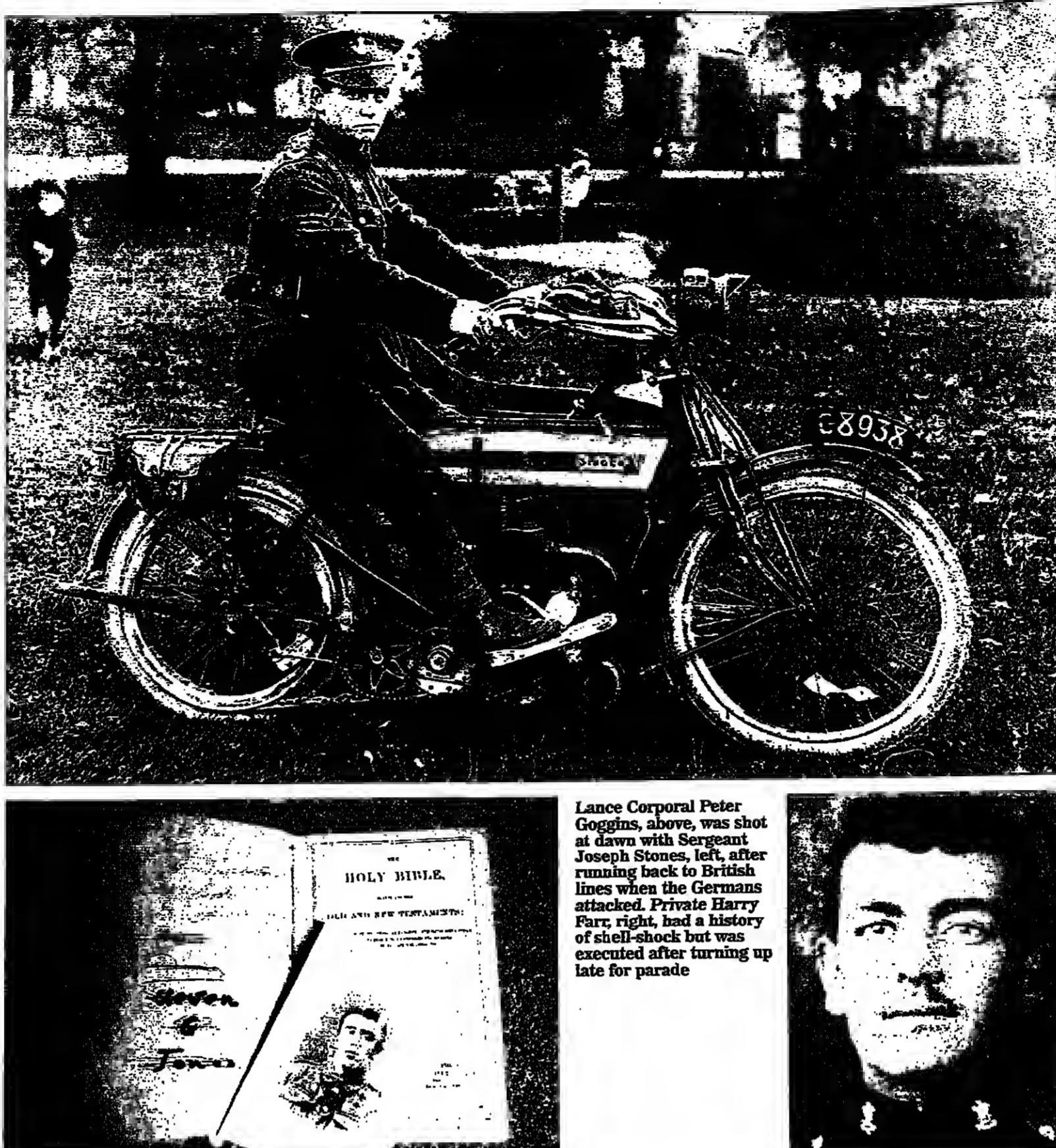
While the proposal is meant to help lower-paid people, it also offers the prospect of hundreds of thousands of pounds for directors who have been forced out of their companies.

Ironically, the point is made in a paper written by a senior manager at the Engineering Employers' Federation who is concerned about the increased burdens on business imposed by the DTI's recent "fairness at work" white paper.

The federation's employment specialist said the removal of the limit would make it far more attractive for highly paid managers to take unfair dismissal claims under employment legislation.

David Yeandle, of the federation, said: "At a time when the Government in other quarters seems to be actively encouraging companies to reduce the length of the contractual notice period of their more senior employees, it is likely to be these employees who will be the principal beneficiaries from this proposed change."

"These more senior and higher paid employees will in the future probably find it far more attractive financially to take unfair dismissal claims to a tribunal rather than, as they do now, pursue 'breach of contract' claims in the courts."



Lance Corporal Peter Goggins, above, was shot at dawn with Sergeant Joseph Stones, left, after running back to British lines when the Germans attacked. Private Harry Farr, right, had a history of shell-shock but was executed after turning up late for parade

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Anger at biotech firm's claims to 'feed the world'

BY LOUISE JURY

AID AGENCIES have united to condemn one of the biggest genetic engineering companies for using the Third World to justify its products.

The company, Monsanto, has been seeking support from leading figures in Africa and Asia for its claims that biotechnology can "feed the world".

An advertising campaign expected to start later this year says, "Let the harvest begin". But furious aid agencies have criticised the promotion as "misleading and manipulative". And African delegates to the United Nations' recent session on plant genetic resources asked for support in fighting the biotechnology companies.

In a joint statement, the UN delegates said: "We strongly object that the image of the poor and hungry from our countries is being used by giant multinational corporations to push a technology that is neither safe, environmentally friendly nor economically beneficial to us."

But despite their opposition, the Global Business Access lobbying company in the United States has circulated a letter asking for signatories from the Third World to support Monsanto's claim that we all share the "same planet and the same needs".

It said: "Many of our needs have an ally in biotechnology and the promising advances it



A child drinking water at a famine camp in Ethiopia

offers for our future. We know that advances in biotechnology must be tested and safe, but they should not be unduly delayed ... Slowing its acceptance is a luxury our hungry world cannot afford."

However, many aid workers believe that recent innovations in farming have promoted non-sustainable agriculture and done little to help the poorest countries. Andrew Simms, of Christian Aid, said that people went hungry because they did not have access to food, not because there was not enough of it. Ethiopia, for example, was a net exporter of food during its famine when the fighting prevented produce reaching those who needed it.

Monsanto's claims of a tomorrow without hunger thanks to their genetically engineered products are cruelly misleading," Mr Simms said.

Liz Hosken, of the Gaia Foundation, said: "The aid agencies are particularly worried by Monsanto, because recent acquisitions have made it one of the world's most powerful agricultural biotechnology companies. It has a stake in every stage of the process, from patented genes to a global seed distribution network. Most significantly, Monsanto paid \$4bn (£2.4bn) for Delta and Pine Land, the company which developed and patented 'terminator technology', which genetically alters seeds so they will not germinate if replanted."

Fears grew further last month when Monsanto announced a partnership with the Grameen Bank, a micro-credit scheme founded in Bangladesh which provides credit to small businesses. Aid agencies fear farmers will be encouraged to buy grain and herbicides they cannot afford.

Liz Hosken, of the Gaia Foundation, said: "The aid agencies are particularly worried by Monsanto, because recent acquisitions have made it one of the world's most powerful agricultural biotechnology companies. It has a stake in every stage of the process, from patented genes to a global seed distribution network. Most significantly, Monsanto paid \$4bn (£2.4bn) for Delta and Pine Land, the company which developed and patented 'terminator technology', which genetically alters seeds so they will not germinate if replanted."

Although the company had bought the terminator technology, it had no plans to use it, he said: "The technology is fairly complicated. The idea that farmers in the Third World are about to get sterile seeds is not true." He added that the information campaign was planned with other biotechnology companies.

Judges asked: Are you a Mason?

JUDGES CAME under pressure yesterday to admit whether or not they were Freemasons after leaders of the secret society rejected government requests to divulge membership details.

The Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine, has "invited" sitting judges to volunteer information on their Masonic status to be entered into a public register.

criminal justice system have been asked to give details.

The request follows the refusal of the United Grand Lodge to hand over details of members after clashes with the Government over the right of Masons to maintain their secrecy. The register, to be issued this autumn, will enable judges to say whether or

not they are Masons. If they decline to answer, this will also be logged.

In a letter to the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Bingham of Cornhill, Lord Irvine said: "I believe that any substantial 'non-co-operation' could create a suspicion in the minds of the public and weaken confidence in the judiciary."

0800

Japan's 'cold pizza' steps into top job

KEIZO OBUCHI, a man known as the "cold pizza" of Japanese politics, secured the job of prime minister yesterday, when he was decisively elected leader of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party.

The 61-year old foreign minister won 225 out of the 411 votes cast, easily surpassing his two party rivals. The LDP's parliamentary majority means that his formal election as prime minister at a special session of the Japanese Diet at the end of the month is in little doubt.

He faces enormous challenges in tackling the country's economic crisis, and in inspiring a public which regards him with a mixture of boredom and contempt.

An opinion poll in yesterday's *Yomiuri Shimbun* newspaper showed the LDP's approval ratings at a record low, and surveys in the days leading up to yesterday's election consis-

BY RICHARD LLOYD PARRY

tently showed that the new leader is less popular among the public than his rivals.

Mr Obuchi's whole career has been directed towards the party, and in Japanese politics that is still what matters most.

The vote, broadcast live on national television, took just 37 minutes. By the end the winner had secured more than twice the 102 votes of his closest challenger, the septuagenarian party stalwart, Seiroku Kajiyama. The 56-year old health minister, Junichiro Koizumi, an outspoken reformer, came last with 84 votes.

Japan's outgoing prime minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, re-

signed a fortnight ago after the party's humiliating losses in elections to the Diet's second chamber. As the leader of the LDP's biggest faction, Mr Obuchi was always favourite to

succeed him. He first became a Diet member in 1963, at the age of 26, inheriting the seat occupied by his father before him.

His first, minor cabinet position was in 1979. After another decade consolidating his support behind the scenes, he served as the LDP's secretary-general in 1993.

Mr Obuchi is known as a quiet, pleasant but ineffectual man with no special qualifications for saving the world's second-largest economy. Even by his own reckoning, he is eclipsed by more powerful men within his party. He once described himself as "a noodle shop among skyscrapers".

"Just because Keizo Obuchi appears on the stage," he observed yesterday, "it won't immediately change society."

The perception of Mr Obuchi as smiling but ineffectual appears to be causing concern within the Japanese govern-

ment. After an American analyst was widely quoted as comparing him to a "cold pizza", foreign ministry officials remonstrated with foreign journalists based in Tokyo.

Few Japanese prime ministers have faced such political and economic dangers as Mr Obuchi. For much of the year, Japan's stock markets and yen have been falling. Bankruptcies are rising, and unemployment has risen to a post-war record of 4.1 per cent. Banks are facing possible collapse under the burden of bad loans worth at least 84 trillion yen (£365bn).

He has said he will quickly carry out a programme to restructure the crippled banks, cut taxes by 6 trillion yen and spend 10 trillion yen in public works programmes to inject money into the economy and encourage spending. "In a sense we are starting from zero," he said yesterday.



Keizo Obuchi, right, the newly-selected president of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party with the two other contenders, Seiroku Kajiyama, centre, and Junichiro Koizumi, following the vote yesterday

AP

Fears of new war in Horn of Africa

BY RUPERT CORNWELL

Ethiopia demanding withdrawal from its territory before peace talks begin, and Eritrea refusing any concessions, the stage looks ominously set for large-scale ground fighting in the coming months.

Small and poor countries engaged in costly and ruinous wars are nothing new in Africa, but this one has especially dismayed the West. Not only do the stakes in a conflict which has taken hundreds of lives seem almost absurdly trivial, but the leaders involved - President Isaias Afewerki of Eritrea and Meles Zenawi, the Ethiopian Prime Minister - have been seen as models of a new breed of African statesmen, receptive to new ideas and capable of regenerating their countries' enfeebled economies.

The ostensible bone of contention is half a dozen pockets of arid land claimed by Addis Ababa but which Eritrea says belong to it under land borders drawn up when the country was colonised by Italy in the late 19th century. Land-locked Ethiopia's real strategic goal, however, may be to regain an outlet to the sea at Eritrea's second port of Asab, close to the border with Djibouti and lost when Eritrea won independence from Ethiopia in 1993.

The two countries are among the poorest in Africa, but according to reports yesterday, Ethiopia has been buying guns and ammunition from China, while Eritrea has been getting similar equipment from Bulgaria and Ukraine. With

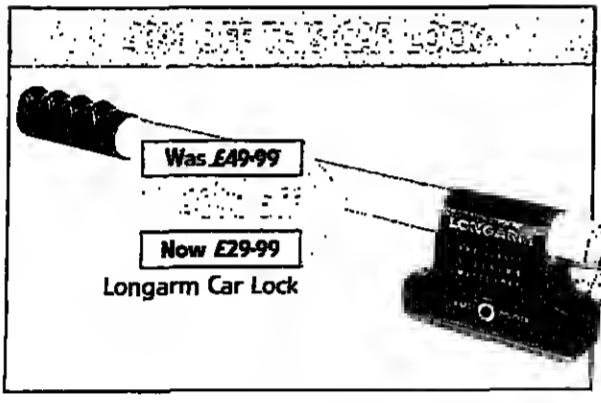
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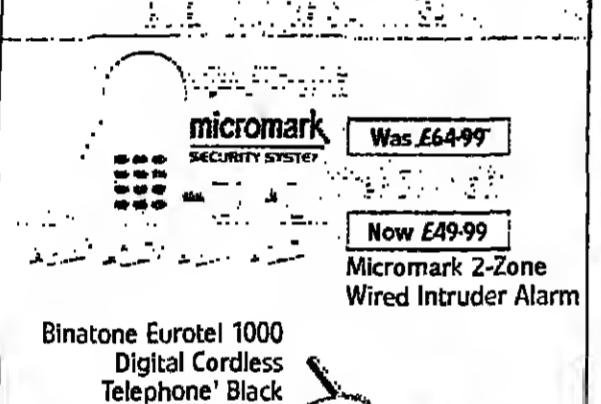
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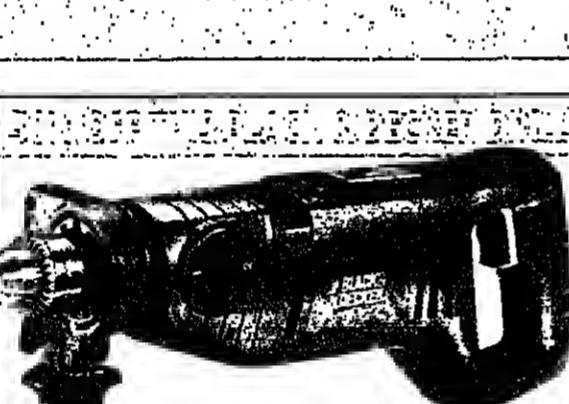
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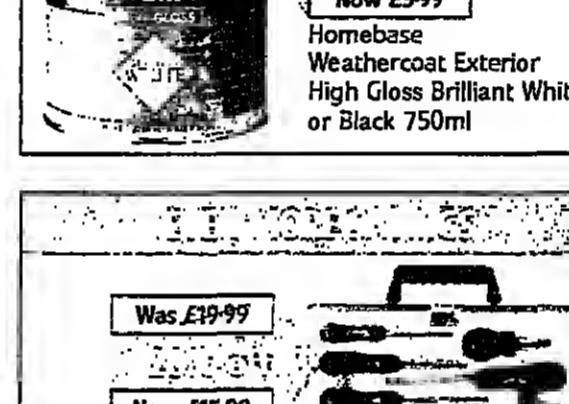
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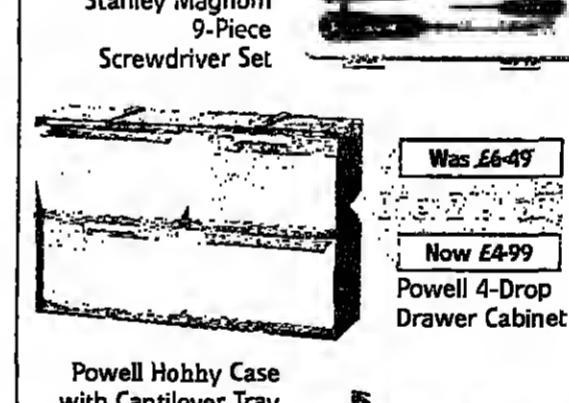
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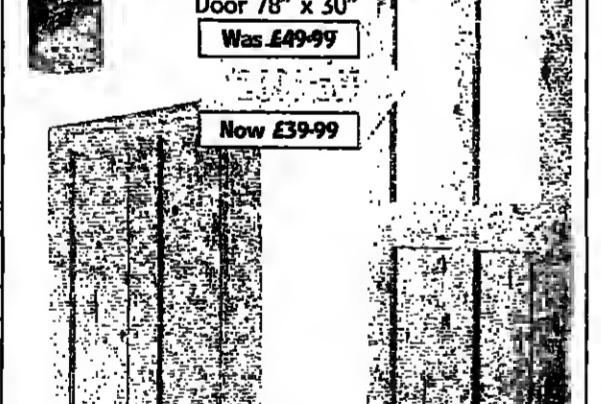
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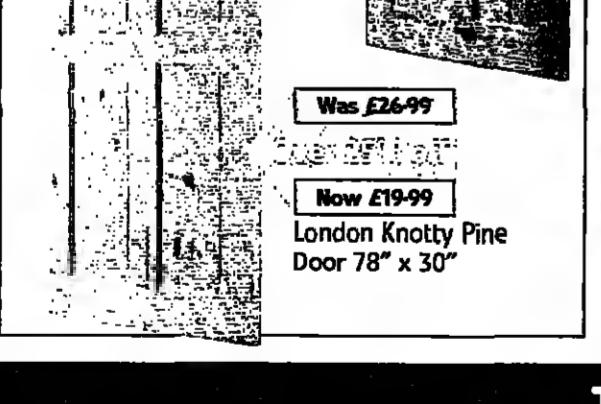
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IN BRIEF

Bank compensates Nazi slaves

DRESDNER BANK, one of Germany's biggest banks, paid \$15,000 (£27,000) in compensation to 10 former slave labourers at a Nazi weapons plant. The recipients were among 1,600 concentration camp prisoners sent to work in the Frankfurt Adlerwerken. Dresdner held a stake in the company.

US aid for Russia's nuclear sites

UNITED STATES Vice President Al Gore yesterday pledged \$3.1m to Russia to help fund the conversion of its closed nuclear research cities to civilian roles. Nuclear co-operation is one of the main issues on the agenda of Mr Gore's talks in Moscow with Prime Minister Sergei Kiriyenko.

Arrested Serb twins 'abused'

THE BOSNIAN Serb twins mistakenly arrested by Nato as war crimes suspects were physically abused during their detention and will sue for damages. Bosnian Serb police said yesterday, Miroslav and Milan Vucicevic, 26, were snatched on Wednesday from Prijedor by Nato peace-keepers only to be released a day later.

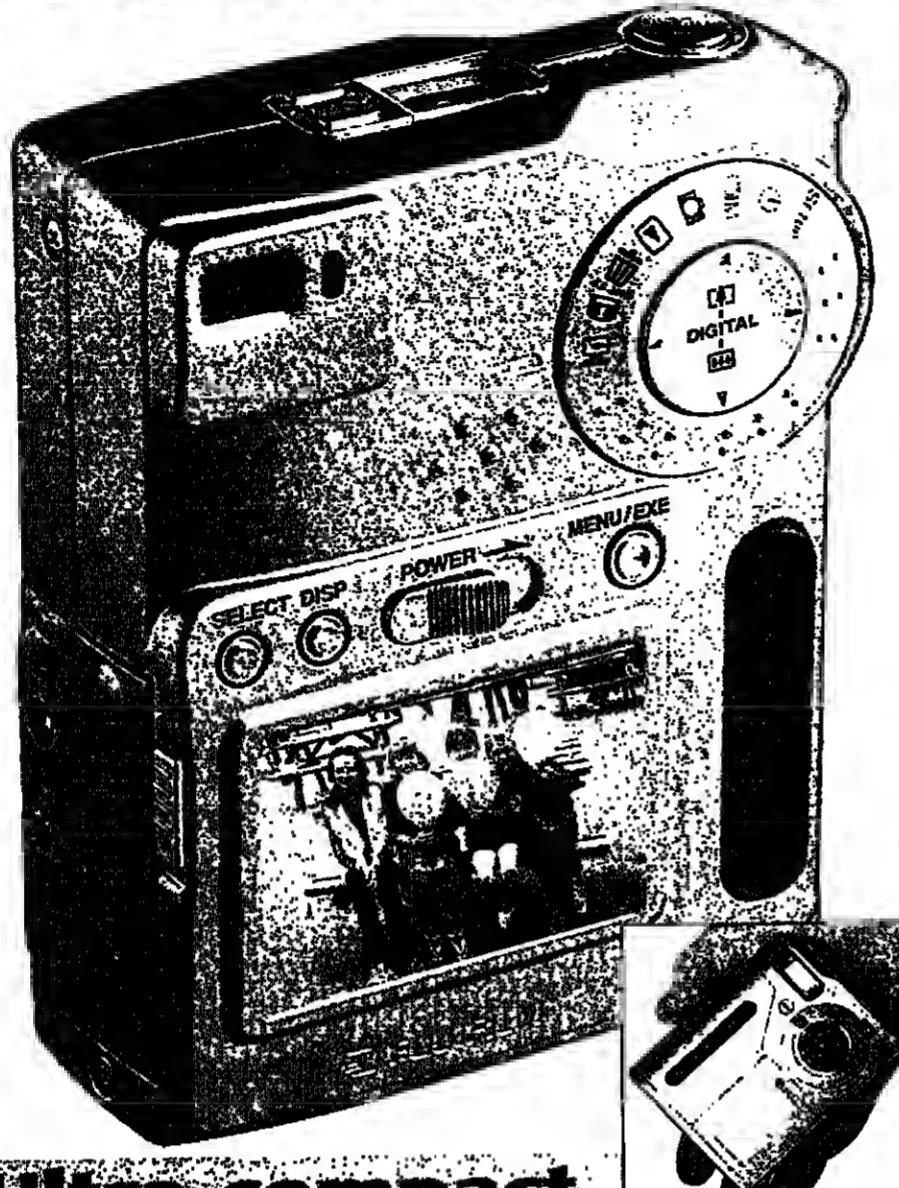
1907 champagne recovered

SWEDISH and Danish treasure hunters raised a wooden ketch with a cargo of champagne sunk by a German submarine in 1916. By yesterday, about 400 bottles of 1907 Heidsieck & Co champagne had been recovered. The Swedish ship was carrying about 4,000 bottles destined for the Russian tsar's army in Finland, when it was sunk.

Wigs avoid scarf ban

SALES OF shoulder-length, synthetic wigs have shot up as female Islamist students in Istanbul try to cover their hair without breaching a university ban on Islamic-style headscarves. The wigs are sold to students who want to keep their hair covered but still attend classes.

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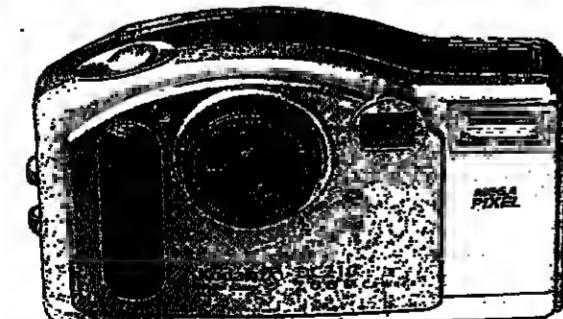
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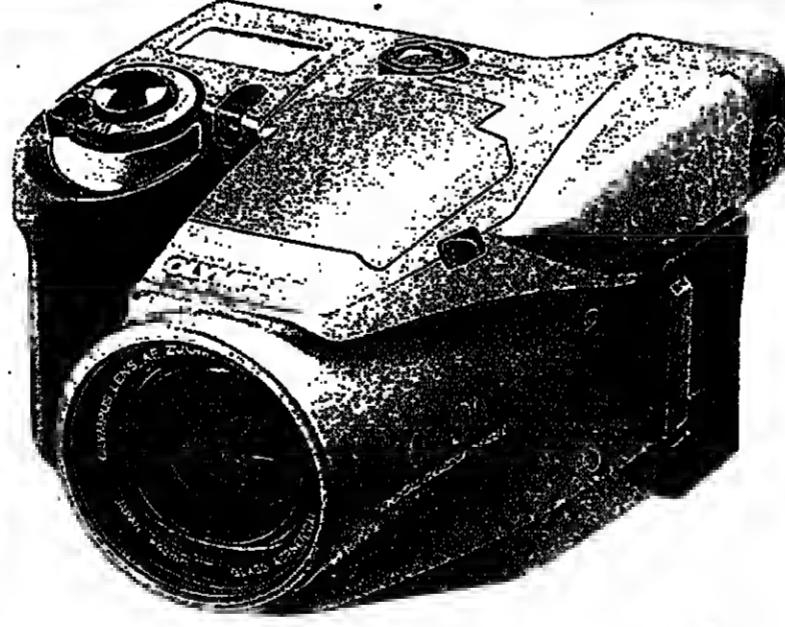
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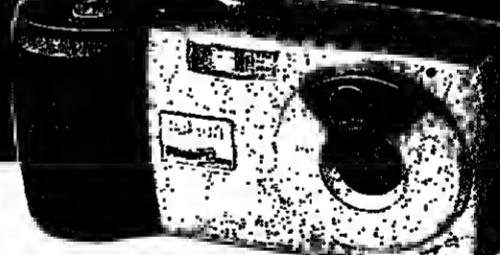
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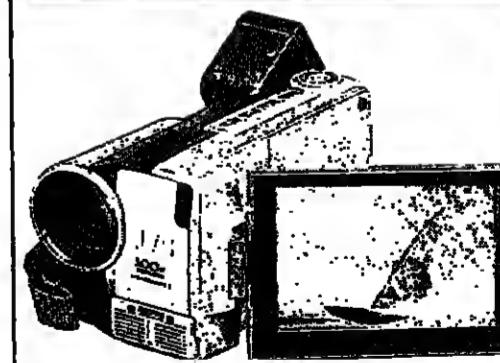


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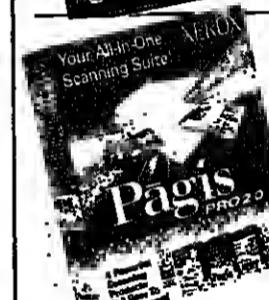
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Russian taxman to citizens: please give generously

"LOVE THE high life? Learn to love paying tax." Not surprisingly, that moralistic slogan, pasted all over Moscow, fell pretty flat.

But the Russian tax authorities have had hardly more success with television cartoons of cavemen making sacrifices to their gods, or the advert of the man unable to have sex because he is worrying about getting caught by the tax police.

The truth is that Russians, long cynical towards a state that

BY HELEN WOMACK
in Moscow

has often abused them, have yet to discover the ecstasy of being taxpayers.

Soon they may have to, as the government is showing a new determination to fight non-payment of taxes, a root cause of Russia's economic crisis. As

evidence of this, President Boris Yeltsin stirred himself at his holiday cottage in Karelia this week and signed a law that

will hit some of the worst offenders, the rich New Russians.

No longer will they be able to hand over a suitcase of cash for an apartment, dacha, yacht or limousine, for the law requires retailers to report all sales worth more than \$20,000 (£12,000). The authorities will then check that the buyer paid tax.

Russians are past masters at finding loopholes in laws. "I imagine there will be a lot of purchases for \$19,500," joked one Western tax lawyer in

Moscow. But each new measure forces tax evaders to twist and turn more to get out of paying and the authorities are hoping that in the end most people will simply find it easier to pay tax.

The luxury tax law is part of a drive to enhance revenue launched by the government to meet the requirements of the International Monetary Fund, which has again bailed Russia out. Before starting its summer recess, the State Duma, or lower house of parliament, ap-

proved most of Prime Minister Sergei Kiriyenko's proposals for raising income. The rest, which failed to win deputies' approval, will now be imposed by presidential decree.

Ordinary Russians will find their tax burden becoming heavier, as well as the rich. Statistics showing that only 4 million out of 60 million Russians have filed in tax returns do not give the full revenue picture, as employers automatically deduct tax from millions of

employees on modest salaries.

These are the workers who will now, whether they like it or not, have to forego another 2 per cent of their wages to build up the national pension fund and head off a pensions crisis. "We are asking you," said Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Sisayev, "to think of it as an act of charity to the old person living next to you."

Poorer Russians will also be worst affected by VAT increases on all goods except ba-

sis like bread and milk and certain items for children.

Against this background, oil companies that complained they would not be competitive unless they were allowed tax breaks got little sympathy. Anatoly Chubais, Russia's negotiator with the IMF, told them to stop whining and to pitch in with everyone else.

Almost every evening, Russia's new chief tax collector Boris Fyodorov, appears on television advocating the need to con-

tribute to society. At the same time, viewers are shown tax police in black masks raiding the premises of major evaders.

Word has it that, just as in Soviet times, people are being encouraged to inform on their neighbours to bring in more tax.

In all this activity, one thing is puzzling. Way back in the spring I made a tax declaration, but the state has not taken me up on it. I am willing to hand over my money. All the tax man has to do is come and get it.

Angolan civil war set to flare again

THE ANGOLAN government has accused Unita, the rebel movement led by Jonas Savimbi, of abandoning the country's peace process and has publicly predicted an imminent "return to war".

Angola's National Assembly this week passed a resolution declaring that Mr Savimbi had broken the 1994 Lusaka Protocol, the United Nations-brokered peace agreement which ended 20 years of civil war.

In its strongest attack on Mr Savimbi since the beginning of the peace talks, the government accused the rebel leader of withdrawing his representatives from the negotiations and hinted that it might expel his party from the Government of National Unity, set up by the Protocol. It also threatened to use force against Unita unless it fulfilled the terms of the agreement.

But the threats against Unita appear to have come too late. While the attempts are made in Luanda, the capital, to restart the peace process, in the countryside the war has already begun.

Over the past two months Unita - the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola - has seized 68 areas from government control. Fighting all over the country, but especially in the diamond-rich north, has forced more than 200,000 refugees to flee their villages and move to cities and towns.

María, 14, and her 12-year-old brother sit in a makeshift bamboo hut in Kaala, central Angola, exhausted after a 20-day march through the bush. During the three-week journey the pair, who were among hundreds of people who walked from their

BY CAROLINE LEES
in Kaala, central Angola

village, lived on maize and roots and drank foul water from streams.

The teenage girl cried as she explained how her village was attacked and everything of value was taken - cattle, sugar, even her family's field of maize, which was about to be cultivated, was hacked down by the attackers.

Monua has already withdrawn its observers from 19 areas it described as "too dangerous" to remain and has threatened to leave the country unless peace talks resume by 15 August. "If there is no improvement in the situation, we will go. There is little point monitoring ceasefire which does not exist," said one observer.

In a pattern repeated all over the country the government blames Unita for attacks on villages and Unita blames the police, or "bandits".

Like many of the refugees who have fled to the relative safety of the provincial town in the last few weeks, María and her family had only recently moved back to their village after the war, believing that the cease-fire set up by the Lusaka Protocol would last.

Their confidence has been misplaced. Military observers working for Monua, the UN special mission in Angola, have confirmed that both sides have broken the ceasefire. Observers have reported that men between the ages of 18 and 35 are being forcibly recruited by both the government and Unita and that both sides are operating training camps for new recruits.

They have confirmed that the government troops and weapons have been building up in key areas in the central

highlands - Unita's traditional power base in the centre of the country where Mr Savimbi is based. Monua has also reported cases where Unita forces have received death threats and midnight beatings. A number of those who received anonymous threats have reportedly been murdered.

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Recent UN sanctions against trade with Unita are widely believed to have achieved little except to strengthen Mr Savimbi's anger towards the organisation, which he has accused of backing the government.

Unita's claims that the UN is biased against it were reinforced recently when a UN soldier entered a town under Unita control wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with the government's logo on the front and the UN's on the back. The soldier was beaten and warned that if he ever returned to the area he would be killed.

"We think the international community wants Unita to disappear," said Brigadier Horacio Junjuvilla, who has been Unita's sole representative at the peace talks in Luanda for the past two months. He was pessimistic about the chances of re-opening the negotiations. "I am tired and depressed," he said. "There are difficult times and it is going to get worse."

Two human rights groups said yesterday that intimidation and violence in Cambodia mean that this weekend's elections will not be free or fair.

Annesty International and Human Rights Watch, in separate statements, urged the international community not to

threaten political killings and threats have soared since Cambodian strongman Hun Sen ousted Prince Norodom Ranariddh as his co-premier in a coup a year ago, but that on an international level "many people are not prepared to say what is happening here".

Killings and attacks on members of the opposition have continued during the one-month election campaign, she said, and human rights workers are inundated with reports of threats or other forms of intimidation against those who oppose Hun Sen or his ruling party.

"Activists have been intimidated, politicians have been

threatened, party agents have been shot and killed, and prisoners have been illegally arrested and harshly beaten by policemen while held in detention," Amnesty said in its statement.

Hun Sen has called the elections to try to win back legitimacy and aid lost after his violent takeover, but has been accused by his critics of rigging the electoral machinery in his favour and using fear, murder and intimidation to ensure that his Cambodian People's Party wins.

Unlike the 1993 United Nations-sponsored poll, which were backed by 20,000 foreign peacekeepers, tomorrow's vote is being organised by Cambodia. But the UN and foreign countries have donated the bulk of the \$34m (£20m) costs and have sent 678 observers to assess whether they are credible.

A sudden and massive increase of the accreditation of apparently untrained observers has given cause for serious concern," added JIOPG spokesman Sven Linder.

"Despite these serious concerns, the JIOPG today feels justified in anticipating that reasonable conditions exist for an election... that can be broadly representative of the will of the Cambodian people," he told a news conference.

- AP

Intimidation mars Cambodia poll

THE RACE is on for the arms industry's most lucrative new market: the three former Warsaw Pact countries now rapidly preparing for Nato membership next spring.

Lined up on the starting block are weapons manufacturers who have launched a public relations and lobbying blitzkrieg to win multi-million dollar contracts to kit out the former Communist states of Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic with state-of-the-art military technology.

Arms companies hope that by getting a foothold in Central Europe in the first round of buying they will be able to lock the new member states into being customers for decades. The principle is the same whether a customer is buying a tank or a tube of toothpaste, say defence analysts: establish brand loyalty as soon as possible and keep out the competition.

"This is a new market for arms manufacturers. The countries who will join Nato will want to operate along Nato lines and to be Nato compatible, so they will want Western equipment. Russian equipment might be cheaper but I wouldn't want to rely on Russia, Ukraine or Belarus for spare parts."

Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic are judged the most politically and economically advanced nations in Central and Eastern Europe. The three are set to join the European Union early next century.

Nato membership demands not just the most advanced weapons systems, but also compatibility with those already in use by member states.

BY ADAM LE BOR
in Budapest

"There may never be such a major sales opportunity again. Joining Nato means everything must be renewed and there are a lot of military needs," said Tibor Vidos, a lobbyist in Budapest for Lockheed Martin, manufacturer of the F-16 fighter plane.

Arms companies hope that by getting a foothold in Central Europe in the first round of buying they will be able to lock the new member states into being customers for decades. The principle is the same whether a customer is buying a tank or a tube of toothpaste, say defence analysts: establish brand loyalty as soon as possible and keep out the competition.

How much the expansion will cost member states is unknown, as the methods of calculating vary and depend on whether or not current military budgets are taken into account.

Arms manufacturers must now compete for markets in the post-Cold War world, where the Soviet threat that justified the existence of the American military-industrial complex has vanished. Central Europe offers immense potential profits.

"There is intense competition going on now for these three markets. Western firms are very well connected and they know exactly what is going on in Nato planning, and they know these countries need new land weapons, new air weapons and air-defence systems," said

computer simulation," said the Western defence analyst.

The sometimes parlous state of the post-Communist economies means that financing the deals can be problematic. Governments and manufacturers have evolved a system of byzantine "offset" deals that impose complicated conditions on the manufacturer.

For example, some of the weapons parts may have to be made in the purchaser country, or the manufacturer may be required to buy something back from the purchasing country.

But many local critics say that the money would be better spent on social and welfare projects such as schools, hospitals and rebuilding the region's infrastructure rather than spending millions of dollars on military equipment.

In Budapest, aerospace manufacturers are expecting the Hungarian Defence Ministry to offer a \$1bn tender for as many as 30 fighter planes. Several rival manufacturers have set up bases from where they run planning and lobbying operations to woo politicians and military officials, trying to win the lucrative tender when it is announced.

Hungary uses Soviet era MiG fighters for air defence, a plane many analysts consider still performs well, although its electronics are outdated and supplies of spares cannot be guaranteed.

Russian arms manufacturer Rosvozruzhenie has offered to



Soviet-made MiG 29s are cheaper than Western aircraft, but they are not Nato compatible.

modernise the MiGs for between \$100-150m. But lobbyists working for Western firms claim it is not a viable option.

"With Hungary joining Nato, it needs a defence capability that is Nato compatible and not dependent on sources outside," said Tibor Vidos.

In the Czech Republic, McDonnell Douglas-Boeing has purchased a stake in Aero Vodochody, the national aircraft manufacturer, to give the company a head start over its rivals. Czech officials have also expressed an interest in buying around 30 fighter planes.

It is not only the multinationals that will profit from Nato expansion. Smaller hi-tech firms are also targeting Central Europe. "There are a lot of opportunities in central Europe, especially for co-operative projects by small independent companies such as those specialising in optics, weapons sighting systems and

electronics," said the International Monetary Fund said that the government should reconsider its financial priorities and spend funds on health, education and structural reforms rather than the helicopter.

The row is an embarrassment for Romanian President Emil Constantinescu, who this week visited Washington, where he appealed for US support for Romania's Nato membership.



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Archie Gottschall, 80, checks the remains of his burnt corn crop near Frederick, Oklahoma. The Midwest has suffered temperatures up to 38C for weeks, and the heatwave has been blamed for 130 deaths J Pat Carter/AP

Polygamy 'is constitutional right in US'

BY ANDREW MARSHALL

POLYGAMY may be protected by the US Constitution, according to the Governor of Utah.

Though it is illegal, several communities in the predominantly Mormon state continue to practise it, and the state generally turns a blind eye. "It's clear to me that in this state and many others, they have chosen not to aggressively prosecute it," Mike Leavitt told a news conference. "I assume there is a legal reason for that, I think it goes well beyond tradition."

The Constitution's First Amendment protects the right to religious expression, and that may cover polygamy, some constitutional experts argue.

Mormons settled Utah 150 years ago as a refuge from religious persecution, and polygamy was an important part of their faith. However, they outlawed it in 1890, and it was a condition of Utah's entry to the United States in 1896 that the state constitution banned it.

But that has not stopped a

number of the small Mormon offshoot communities from continuing the practice.

In the past few weeks the local paper, the *Salt Lake Tribune*, has highlighted a number of cases where polygamy has caused other problems. A 16-year-old girl was beaten by her father after running away from her polygamous uncle, to whom she had been married; and another community has been revealed to subsist largely on welfare payments. It is perhaps no coincidence that the *Tribune* is in a circulation war with the *Deseret News*, its Mormon-owned rival in the city.

The Governor said that the criminal aspects of the cases needed to be dealt with, whatever the status of polygamy.

"What needs to be cracked down, if there is to be such a crack-down, is any abuse of people's civil and human rights," said Governor Leavitt, a Republican.

"Whether that happens inside or outside of those organisations or cultures, it needs to be dealt with quickly."

Iran missile test no bar to talks

BY MARY DEJEVSKY
in Washington

PRESIDENT BILL Clinton said this week's Iranian missile test would not be allowed to derail the cautious US rapprochement with Iran.

If deployed, Mr Clinton warned, the medium-range missile could change the "stability dynamics" of the whole region, but went on: "I don't think it's an argument for closing off all opportunities for rapprochement."

Washington has been engaged in a tentative opening to Iran following a US television interview given by Iran's new President, Mohammad Khatami, at the beginning of the year.

On Thursday, the White House and State Department

confirmed that Iran had successfully launched an 800-mile range Shahab-3 missile that would be capable of reaching three of Washington's major allies in the region, Israel, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

Defence analysts in Washington and London concurred, however, that the rationale for the test was likely to have been defensive rather than offensive in nature and predicated on a perceived threat from Iraq rather than Israel.

Alleged Russian sales of missile technology to Iran have been a point of contention between Washington and Moscow, and last week the US imposed sanctions on nine Russian companies, accusing them of secret technology sales to Iran.

Arson case retrial

A GERMAN court ruled yesterday that a Lebanese man cleared of starting a fire that killed 10 asylum-seekers in 1996 should be put on trial again.

The Federal Court of Justice in Karlsruhe said Saifwan Eid, found not guilty in an earlier trial because of insufficient evidence, had to be retried in the light of evidence obtained by prosecutors by eavesdropping on his conversations in jail which had not been allowed in his first trial.

DAVID USBORNE

One theory goes that the request for the separation gave Rupert Murdoch a sense of liberation. He has not looked better for years

— THE WEEKEND REVIEW, PAGE 5 →

Search for wave victims halted

BY ROBERT MILLIKEN
in Sydney

A WEEK after three tidal waves struck the coast of north-west Papua New Guinea, the authorities yesterday decided to abandon work on recovering bodies, seal the region off and allow the dead to stay where they once lived.

Most of the dead from the waves that hit on the evening of 17 July are stuck amid debris in the Sissano lagoon next to the Bismarck Sea, where several villages were wiped out. In tropical heat and high humidity the task of recovering them has become a nightmare and a health hazard, as wild dogs, sharks and crocodiles invade the area to feed off the bodies.

The authorities have decided to complete a search for survivors in the jungle and mangrove swamps behind the lagoon using helicopters and ground sweeps with specially trained dogs down in from the United States. Then engineers

summed dead, the final death toll would be more than 4,000.

But there are hopes that many of the missing could still be alive. Over the past few days, people who were hiding in the mangrove swamps and jungle behind the coast have started to come out. Some had wounds infected with gangrene, and by Thursday morning Australian doctors at Vanimo had to amputate limbs from seven people, including an eight-year-old boy.

Australian officials, who have been co-ordinating the relief effort with the Papua New Guinea government, said yesterday that 1,500 people were known to have died in the tidal waves, or tsunami. About 5,200 survivors were in care centres and 700 people were in local hospitals and a field hospital set up at the town of Vanimo by the Australian defence forces.

There are no firm figures on how many people lived in the disaster zone, but most estimates put the number at 8,000-10,000. On yesterday's figures, this would mean that up to 2,000 people could still be unaccounted for. If all are pre-

year, the country has suffered economically from drought and the impact of the East Asian economic turmoil, and Mr Skate has been accused of skimping on disaster aid. The west Sepik district, where it occurred, is one of the country's most remote regions, and has little infrastructure capable of handling earthquakes and tsunamis which have struck before. The latest was the most devastating in human cost.

The public radio station at Vanimo had been off the air since last October due to funding cuts. *The National*, the leading daily newspaper, attacked the government for letting the country's disaster relief service run down.

Australian medical teams were on the ground in Vanimo before PNG officials got there," it said. "What is the use of having an emergency office if it is not able to respond?"

THE STENA HSS

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Breaking taboos: Soap operas modelled on British favourites are changing Afghan and Kenyan attitudes

Taliban lose out to daily dramas

BY JASON BURKE
in Peshawar, Pakistan

THREE TIMES a week the 120 characters of *New Home New Life* - Afghanistan's hit soap opera - have to face mine explosions, rocket attacks, epidemics, earthquakes, murderous blood feuds and the sheer unending drudgery of scraping a living in one of the poorest, and most violent, countries in the world.

The hair-raising daily routine comes courtesy of BBC World Service Radio who, assisted by the Department for International Development and a range of international aid organisations, broadcast the drama throughout Afghanistan and western Pakistan to an audience estimated at between five and fifteen million.

It is designed to entertain and to educate. Every episode is saturated with useful information supplied by dozens of aid organisations. Advice on health, hygiene, mine avoidance, sanitation, environmental conservation and other subjects are all seamlessly woven into dialogue and plot.

But *New Home New Life* has another, less obvious objective: the careful and deliberate exposure of an ultra-conservative society to modern, Western values.

"There is a covert agenda," admitted the deputy director of the drama, Obaidullah Mehaq. "And it is progressive and liberal."

One key theme tackled by the soap is the liberation of women. In Afghanistan women are often prevented from working outside the home, denied education and made to wear the traditional burqa - a head to toe cloak with small holes to breath and see through.

The *New Home New Life* writers have created a young woman called Gulalai who has trained as a nurse despite fierce opposition from conservatives in her village. She now works in the village clinic where she has saved a number of babies' lives to everyone's great delight.

"So we have a very sympathetic character going against tradition and everyone ends up better off. The message is clear," said Mehaq.

"We push things as far as we can but only to the extent that it is acceptable to the audience's mind. Many ideas are merely subliminally suggested. For example Gulalai, a very popular and positive role model, has now stopped wearing the burqa and is wearing a head scarf instead."

Other traditions receive a

similar treatment. In one episode the need to pay an extortionate "bride-price" - the traditional Afghan gift given to the bride's family - forces a previously honest young man into crime. In another episode the villagers break with local custom and ignore the edicts of a village elder to everyone's benefit.

Drug abuse is addressed, albeit from a slightly different angle than in *EastEnders*. With around half of the world's opium originating in Afghanistan authorities in the West are desperate to restrict its production.

A series of storylines in the drama have spelt out the message that the cultivation of opium - a traditional crop in Afghanistan - destroys people and communities, turning farmers and their families into debtors, addicts and thieves.

Even Thatcherite free enterprise makes an appearance in the form of Rafat, a young man who returns from the refugee camps in Pakistan, full of entrepreneurial spirit. Other episodes have plugged the right to free speech, the democratic process, even Western concepts of private property.

But it has its critics. Despite the popularity of the drama among their troops, leaders of the Taliban religious army - who have imposed a harsh brand of Islamic law on the two thirds of Afghanistan they control - are uneasy.

Rahimullah Zormati, the Taliban government's deputy minister for culture, last week criticised the BBC of broadcasting "social programmes... of a political nature."

Their reaction is not surprising according to one Afghan journalist who is now a refugee in Pakistan. He said that *New Home New Life* is written "by a bunch of Westernised, educated bourgeois from Kabul."

"They are exactly the sort of people, with exactly the sort of values, that the whole Taliban movement is a reaction against."

Whatever the social background of the writers, the effect of the soap is the obvious.

In one mud-walled home the women argued as they prepared vegetables for lunch.

One woman, who gave her name as "Imam Jam's wife" said that the example of Gulalai had persuaded her to let her daughters work outside the house. Her daughter, cradling a 10-day-old baby, said that she had even taken off her burqa once or twice. Her mother clicked her tongue in disbelief.

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"We push things as far as we can but only to the extent that it is acceptable to the audience's mind. Many ideas are merely subliminally suggested. For example Gulalai, a very popular and positive role model, has now stopped wearing the burqa and is wearing a head scarf instead."

Other traditions receive a



In Kenya, broadcasters on radio and television can be used as a tool for education in a wide variety of topics

Gamma/Frank Spooner

Ambridge it's not, but Kenya's farmers are hooked on soap-life

BY PATRICIA NICOL

TEMBEA NA MAJIRA, or *Move With the Times*, a tale of everyday Kenyan folk inspired by *The Archers*, has gripped the nation and subliminally educated it in the ways of safe sex and organic farming methods.

Nine million listeners tune in twice a week to find out how the show's HIV positive widow Maria is coping with her newborn baby, and the outcome of the latest scam of the corrupt village chief and his bungling side-kick.

Tembea Na Majira, like *The Archers*, has its roots in public service broadcasting. It is accompanied, however, by a magazine programme in which issues raised in the soap are debated by experts.

The original idea for an African radio soap came from David Campbell, a British media consultant, who arrived in Kenya in 1979 to work for the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) as an agricultural communications adviser. He had previously had some contact with the team behind Radio 4's farming soap and

familial conflicts, love, death, sex, drink, corruption and girl power all feature.

One in six Kenyans is thought to carry the HIV virus, and sixteen per cent of male listeners say the programme's treatment of HIV brought home the dangers of sexual promiscuity. In fact listeners have credited the programme with changing both their farming and their sexual practices.

Eighty per cent of the work done in rural Kenya is done by women, but they are difficult to reach because they are less likely to be able to read. A soap opera in Swahili seemed a good way to hook them in and retain their interest," he said.

Nothing came of the idea until 1991, when Kate Lloyd Morgan, a British ODA field worker, was asked, along with two Archers producers, to put together a team of Kenyans to be trained to produce a radio programme.

The result was *Ndingo Nacio* (Get With It) which broadcast to the Meru region on the eastern slopes of Mount Kenya for four years before the project went national with *Tembea Na Majira*.

The colour may be local to Africa, but the themes in *Tembea Na Majira* are universal. The programme "breaking" the news that her new-born child, conceived shortly before her husband's death, was free of the virus, secured some of the soap's highest ratings.

"When we first did research into what the women wanted to learn from the soap opera, many were saying that they didn't really understand AIDS," said Mr Campbell.

"There were lots of myths spreading about the disease. It was very important that Moga, who eventually died of AIDS, was one of the soap's most popular characters and that we conveyed that an HIV positive mother could give birth to an uninfected child."

The programme's patriarch and matriarch are Wafalo and Nanjala, who preside over an ever-growing and increasingly difficult brood. Nanjala dabbles in witchcraft and feuds with the redoubtable Wanjiku, Wafalo's younger, feisty second wife. Wanjiku, who is determined to set up her own small business breeding chickens, is one of the show's pivotal female characters. Another one is the teenage Sarah, a rebel-

ious daughter who has an ongoing feud with her father, who fails to see why his daughter should have a secondary school education.

Within six months of first being broadcast *Tembea Na Majira* had become Kenya's second most listened to radio programme after the news.

The soap must not simply become a vehicle for tirades against male behaviour, however. "We have to be very careful that by making men the butt of the jokes we don't alienate male listeners," says Campbell.

"In most households it's still the man who controls the radio."

The programme-makers also have to take care that their portrayal of corruption at a local level is not seen as an implicit critique of the Kenyan government. In the past they have turned down offers of sponsorship from groups such as Amnesty International, who have questioned the Kenyan government's human rights record. "Our aim is to educate and we can't do that if we are taken off air," Campbell said.

Bhutto arrest could spark mass protest

BY RAJA ASGHAR

THE political party of Pakistan's opposition leader, Benazir Bhutto, yesterday threatened to take to the streets in protest if the government arrests her on her planned return from abroad tomorrow.

"The whole party is going to fight - we will come on the streets," the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) secretary-general, Ahmed Mukhtar, said in Islamabad. It was responding to press reports that the government of Nawaz Sharif had decided to arrest the former prime minister.

A high court panel in Mr Sharif's home province of Punjab last week issued non-bailable warrants for Miss Bhutto's arrest for failure to appear before it in connection with a case in which she is accused of receiving kickbacks in the import of tractors from Poland.

Her lawyers say she could not appear because she had gone to Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, to meet her children. This was with the permission of the high court in her home province of Sind, the lawyers say.

The next hearing is set for Monday. Newspapers have quoted officials as saying orders had been issued to the Federal Investigation Agency to arrest Miss Bhutto on her arrival at Karachi airport.

Mr Mukhtar said she would appear before the Lahore court on Monday and her arrest would only provoke her followers to agitate.

Mr Mukhtar said the PPP central executive committee would meet in Karachi tomorrow to chart their plans if Miss Bhutto were arrested.

He expected a large number of party followers to greet their leader at Karachi airport.

A report in *The News* daily yesterday quoted an unidentified Cabinet minister as saying the government had decided to arrest Miss Bhutto because "non-compliance will amount to contempt of court."

Another paper, *The Nation*, said the decision to arrest Miss Bhutto was taken "after the Prime Minister had given the go-ahead in compliance with the court orders."

Raza Rabbani, a PPP member of the Senate (upper house) and Miss Bhutto's lawyer, said such arrest warrants had usually been issued to compel a person to appear before a court and were not necessarily intended for actual arrest.

"We are not afraid of courts; we don't want to run away from courts," he said. Mr Rabbani said Miss Bhutto would personally appear before the Lahore court on Monday and there was no need to arrest her. "If they (the government) did anything against ... (Miss Bhutto), this will put a great strain on the federation (of Pakistan)."

Things are not all right on the night but they love it anyway



Simon McBurney ensures the show goes on despite bureaucracy and glitches Jane Brown

SIMON MCBURNEY, artistic director of London-based Théâtre de Complicité, arrived in New York on Monday 13 July with his stunningly intricate ensemble piece about the Polish author and Holocaust victim Bruno Schulz (1892-1942), *The Street of Crocodiles*. Last performed four years ago, it is to open here in just four days as part of this year's Lincoln Center Festival. Much hype has come before it. But can it get ready in time?

Instantly, he is stymied by bureaucracy. The Lincoln Center has hired a theatre at a nearby police academy, the John Jay College. But the college is charging \$1,000 (£600) an hour and McBurney discovers that any rehearsal time in the theatre which has been built in London, does not properly fit the stage. Local journalists are trying to interview him "every second" as he struggles to work. McBurney is having trouble sleeping.

Efforts by McBurney to persuade the Lincoln Center's producers to buy more time at John Jay go nowhere. He appeals for at least one over-night session, to fix lighting and paint the set. Request denied. He and cast are exiled to a tiny

rehearsal studio off Times Square. There, the air conditioning is bust. Arguments rage with the Lincoln Center. "They say this is something they've 'bought', who in fact it is something that is still in creation. There is an immediate conflict."

MOUNTING TERROR the following day, McBurney gathers his actors, three of whom have never performed the piece before. He knows he must get four vital sequences re-bearied. By day's end he has achieved just two. "And still the Lincoln Center won't budge." There are other distractions. The whole back wall of the set, which has been built in London, does not properly fit the stage. Local journalists are trying to interview him "every second" as he struggles to work. McBurney is having trouble sleeping.

AFTER A session with the lighting crew on Wednesday

A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF SIMON MCBURNEY

MCBURNEY BEGINS A TECHNICAL

run-through on stage at the John Jay. This is vital - the production is insanely technical and complex - and it must be done today. By six o'clock they have done barely half the first scene. "I feel this absolutely unbelievable panic but I know it would be hopeless to communicate it to the actors. I think, 'God, how are we going to do this?'" Before bed, McBurney is profoundly worried. The tech is not finished. And still they have to do a full dress rehearsal. The opening night is tomorrow. "I cannot let on that this really is not looking good or it will fall apart."

7pm comes. At 7.30, the front of house is getting upset - the doors must be opened. McBurney rushes to help with make-up. Still feigning calm.

No one knows that worse is still to come. It is past eight.

Everyone is seated and - calamity - the few lights dimly illuminating the stage inexplicably go dark.

It is not meant to happen. McBurney begs the lighting box for explanation. The computer has crashed. Everything wiped. What to do?

McBurney informs the front of house - there is instant paralysis. McBurney mounts the stage. "Ladies and gentlemen, I regret to announce..." "What? We can't bear you," McBurney.

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE COMPUTER HAS CRASHED. THERE ARE NO LIGHTS. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO TAKE FIVE..."

Miraculously, the computer glitch is solved. The play begins

at last. Still things are going wrong. A tap that is meant to gush water doesn't. Lighting is all to pot. Worse, the pace is incredibly slow and the audience is not laughing where it should.

"I start to sweat terribly. I start cursing and my producer next to me is gripping my arm."

More disasters. Bright lights inexplicably bathe a final scene that depends on the stage being almost entirely dark. A gunshot goes off - but several seconds too late. Ob misery.

At last, it is over. Lights up, cast on stage and ... What's this? They loved it. The audience loved it. The applause is crazy. A standing ovation. "You see, you see," bellows his producer in his ear.

STILL NO joy with the Lincoln Center over access to John Jay. But the worst is over. On Friday there are fewer hitches in the show. Pace is better too. Lou Reed is in the audience. But on Friday night, sleeping is hopeless. Tomorrow the review will be in the

New York Times. It has to be good if seats for next week are to be filled. McBurney gets up at four and tramps streets bunting for the *Times* - can't find one. 8am and it slides under door Read it. It is ... brilliant. (See excerpts below.) Hah! How the Lincoln Center loves him now on this morning.

"The atmosphere went from darkness to light." The power of the *Times*! The rest of run (until 26 July) sells out. Other stops on the tour: Toronto, Minneapolis and Tokyo.

EXCERPTS FROM the review:

"This astounding production from the Théâtre de Complicité..."

"The troupe's brilliant ensemble ... fill the stage with the sort of distorted, improbable images that you see in real life only through peripheral vision. "The work's final, lyrical image ... is devastating and unspeakably beautiful."

Ben Brantley, theatre critic, *New York Times*, 18 July 1998.

DAVID USBORNE

Bhui
arres
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spark
mass
protes

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BRIEFING

VAT to be lifted on gold bullion

GOLD BARS, wafers and coins sold mainly for their bullion content will no longer be subject to VAT once a directive from Brussels lifting VAT from "investment" gold is implemented, probably in 1999. VAT was imposed after the discovery of widespread fraud involving reclaiming VAT from melted coins which had not paid it in the first place and in effect killed the retail trade in coins. Prices are currently at a 20-year low. Krugerrands sell for around £180 and sovereigns for £44 plus VAT.

Car Group in talks over rescue

THE CAR GROUP
share price, pence

Source: Datstream

operates car supermarkets, is seeking an equity injection and is in talks with a major financial institution." A review of its operations has identified a need to reduce its break-even point. It hopes the restructuring will improve margins, which are running below forecast levels.

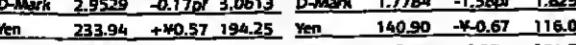
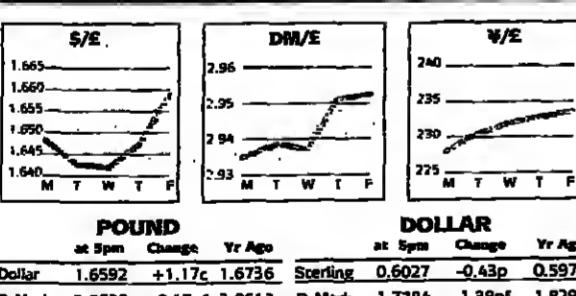
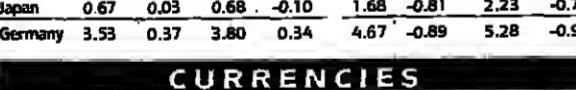
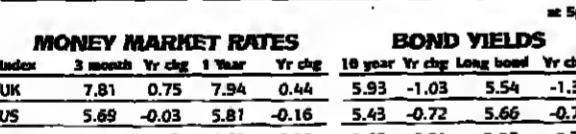
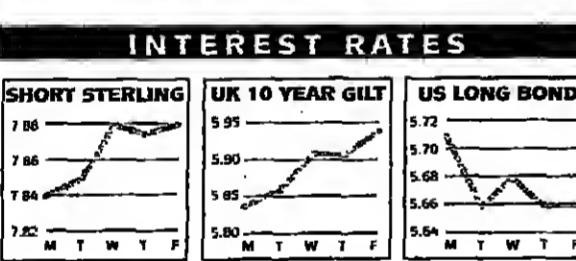
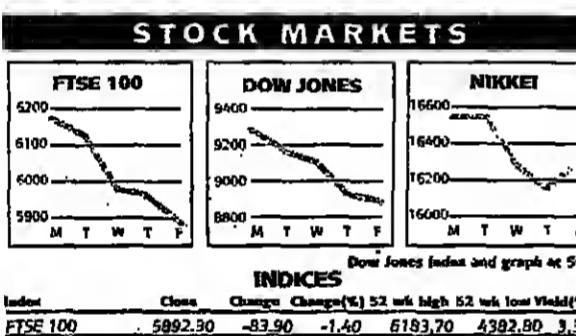
FSA moves on bogus bank

THE FINANCIAL Services Authority yesterday gained a High Court injunction against a fictitious bank run from offices in west London which is believed to have taken £17m (£10.2m) in unauthorised deposits.

The injunction was granted against Hanover Bank Ltd and two individuals, Winston Allen and Patrick Makossa-Jouvin, who promoted Hanover Bank from offices at 22a St Ives Street, London SW7 and Suite 234, 28 Old Brompton Road, London SW3.

It restrains the defendants from accepting deposits in contravention of the Banking Act, which insists banks must be authorised by the FSA unless they are exempt.

The injunction also stops the defendants making fraudulent inducements to make a deposit and from describing the company, incorporated in Antigua, as a bank. The FSA issued an urgent appeal for people with any information on Hanover Bank to contact its investigations department on 0171-601 5541 or 0171-601 4522.



www.bloomberg.com/uk

SOURCE: BLOOMBERG

TOURIST RATES

Australia (\$)	2.5698	Mexican (new peso)	13.23
Austria (schillings)	20.09	Netherlands (gulders)	3.2214
Belgium (francs)	59.07	New Zealand (\$)	3.0378
Canada (\$)	2.4057	Norway (krone)	12.17
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8367	Portugal (escudos)	290.03
Denmark (kroner)	10.95	Saudi Arable (rials)	6.0116
Finland (markka)	8.7447	Singapore (\$)	2.6952
France (francs)	9.5889	Spain (pesetas)	242.23
Germany (marks)	2.8706	South Africa (rand)	9.9485
Greece (drachma)	472.88	Sweden (krone)	12.80
Hong Kong (\$)	12.40	Switzerland (francs)	2.4213
Ireland (pounds)	1.1355	Thailand (bahts)	61.01
Indian (rupees)	64.47	Turkey (liras)	429176
Israel (shekels)	5.5591	USA (\$)	1.6116
Italy (lira)	2834		
Japan (yen)	228.72		
Malaysia (ringgit)	6.5308		
Malta (lira)	0.6228		

Rates for indication purposes only

Source: Thomas Cook

BUSINESS

Nationwide to raise rates

Move comes a day after vote to stay mutual

BY ANDREW VERITY

NATIONWIDE revealed plans to raise its interest rates yesterday, less than 24 hours after members voted by a tiny majority to keep the building society mutual.

The society said it will raise interest rates for mortgage borrowers by up to 0.4 percentage points on 1 September - whether or not the Bank of England raises base rates next month.

The rise is certain to annoy borrowing members, who on Thursday voted for the building society to stay mutual on the basis of better rates. The cost of a typical £50,000 mortgage with Nationwide will increase by up to £200 a year.

"We certainly don't need a margin of 0.85 between Nationwide and converted

societies". It is too large a margin.

"You don't have to win the World Cup 3-0; you can actually win it just on penalties."

Nationwide has resisted raising its rates for nearly a year despite three base rate rises - in August and November last year and then in June this year.

This has left its mortgage rate at 8.1 per cent, compared with 8.45 per cent at its fellow mutual Bradford & Bingley, and 8.95 per cent at Abbey National and Halifax. The size of the difference has given strong support to the society's campaign to stay mutual.

Mr Davis added: "We are

three rises behind everyone else because we have been trying to hold other people back from raising rates. It didn't seem appropriate [to raise rates] in the middle of an election."

Nationwide will keep its mortgage rate below that of the converted societies - probably by at least a quarter of a point.

However, the rise is certain to sow disappointment among borrowers. Throughout the campaign to stay mutual, mortgage holders have been enticed to vote for mutual by

lower interest rates.

Typically, a homeowner with a £50,000 loan was told to expect a saving of £55 a month in

comparison with a converted society - but only as long as rates were sustained.

City analysts have long believed Nationwide could not sustain such a low rate. The society only committed itself to holding at 8.1 per cent until August 1. But it has carefully avoided warning rates would rise after the vote.

Mr Davis yesterday resisted suggestions that the board had kept rates down to swing the vote in its favour.

"If we were trying to manipulate the vote we would have done the opposite. We would have kept mortgages a fraction lower and pushed the savings rates much higher."

He also hinted that Nationwide would use its 1 per cent efficiency advantage, stemming from the absence of dividends to shareholders, to offer better savings rates.

Mr Davis dismissed persistent suggestions that the narrowness of the vote on mutuality would encourage a hostile bid.

"The problem you've got is you are a predator in you won't have to persuade 50 per cent: you will have to persuade 75 per cent. All offers would have to come through the board and we would probably give them quite a hard time."

He added: "Labour got 44 per cent of the vote and they called it a landslide: we get 51 [and people say] 'Well that was a bit close wasn't it?' What exactly is the logic in that?"

Wessex deal could herald more water takeovers

BY NIGEL COPE

Associate City Editor

"Currently there are only a handful of large private-sector companies operating in this market, and there are tremendous opportunities for future growth as the industry moves toward privatisation and consolidation," said Kenneth L. Lay, Enron's chairman and chief executive.

Enron has not ruled out other UK deals, though it said it will concentrate first on the integration of Wessex, which operates in areas such as Avon, Dorset and Somerset. Enron is also interested in opportunities in Europe, South America and North America.

The Houston group said it had not held talks with any other UK water companies, and had chosen Wessex because of its position in the industry's performance tables and the strength of its management.

Wessex's chairman Nicholas Hood and chief executive Colin

Skellett will stay on in their existing roles, with the extra brief of developing the international side of the business. "We didn't hold any other talks. We looked at the sector and decided Wessex was the right one for us," said Ralph Hodge, chairman of Enron Europe.

Wessex sought to acquire South West Water two years ago but the move was blocked by the competition authorities. It has been keen on breaking into the international market but lacked the firepower. Mr Hood's 122,000 shares mean he will net £200,000 from the deal, while Mr Skellett will net £400,000.

Enron and City analysts said they did not expect the deal to run into problems with the regulatory authorities, but Ofwat, the water watchdog, may be concerned about the loss of another stock market listing in the sector as it will

reduce the pool of companies

it uses to compare on criteria such as dividend payments.

Yet Mr Hodge was confident the deal would not be referred.

"We have been working with the gas and electricity regulators here," he said. "We feel very comfortable with the UK regulatory regime, which is clear and transparent."

City analysts seemed happy

with the 630p-per-share exit price, which represents a 28

premium to the 493p close on

Thursday and a multiple of 12.3 times Wessex's earnings last year. "It's a pretty full price," said Richard Franklin of BT Alex Brown. Enron is valued at \$18.6bn, and recorded profits of \$1.05m before exceptional costs last year on turnover of \$20m. Its principal activities are in oil and gas as well as wholesale and retail energy operations in the US.

BT joins Malaysia's mobile phone boom

BY NIGEL COPE

future." He said BT remained on the lookout for further international opportunities.

A dive in the Asian stock markets has helped drive down asset values, and analysts welcomed a deal which they said had been sealed at a reasonable price. BT shares closed 3.5p higher at 825p.

BT, which will take a seat on Binariang's board, said Malaysian mobile penetration was only nine to 11 per cent, with vast growth prospects. Tun Hanif Omar, chairman of Binariang, said: "We have successfully grown the Maxis mobile business to the current 450,000 subscriber base."

The deal is part of a larger

plan by Binariang to raise about £600m through links with overseas groups and debt securities. Through Concert, the Malaysian group will have access to BT's global business services. "The involvement of BT will provide our company with broader technical and financial resources, so that we may complete the expansion of our GSM cellular and terrestrial networks to achieve our objective of becoming the preferred supplier of communications service to all Malaysians," Mr Omar said.

Apart from BT, Binariang had been recently linked to companies including Singapore Telecommunications, Nippon Telegraph and Telephone, and Cable and Wireless.

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AROUND THE WORLD'S MARKETS

LONDON

EQUITIES STAGED another ragged retreat. Footsie tumbled 83.9 points to 5,892.3 and the supporting indices were weak. The market has been hit by the rush of profit warnings, particularly the alert from ICL. It fears more trading gloom as sterling remains strong and the Asian crisis continues.

GEN led the retreat with a 65p fall to 770p. ICL fell a further 43p to 787p. British Aerospace, on talk of a

Americans make a bigger splash

COME ON IN, the water's lovely. Having been barred from building any more power stations over here, the US corporation Enron has decided to try its hand at running a water company instead. The blurb accompanying yesterday's agreed £1.6bn bid for Wessex Water was full of the usual clichés and management-speak. Wessex will become the centre of excellence for Enron's new international water business, helping it develop supplies in exotic places as far afield as Latin America and Asia. Has no-one told the Americans that when British water companies try to export their skills abroad it invariably ends in disaster?

For Wessex, the deal shows how limited its ambitions became after it was blocked from taking over South West Water. The management will stay on, but under the thumb of the feisty-sounding Texan lady Rebecca P. Mark. As for customers, Enron says they will benefit from Wessex being part of a stronger international group - while studiously avoiding any reference to prices.

There are not the same kind of savings to be had here from two water companies merging, or even a United Utilities-style mix of water and electricity. But Enron is



MICHAEL HARRISON

not exactly flavour of the month, having opposed the Government's coal review at every turn. And any deal involving utility fat cats that does not deliver tangible benefits for the consumer looks dead in the water.

The least the regulator, Ian Byatt, will surely want is his pound of flesh for the loss of a stock market comparator that will result - always supposing the Americans manage to avoid the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. The market took yesterday's deal as the cue for a feeding frenzy in the water sector. But those

hoping for the floodgates to open may find themselves waiting in vain.

A tale of two Germans

ON TUESDAY this week, Siemens plc, the UK arm of the German electronics group, hosted a dinner in London for a small gathering of correspondents. Alan Wood, the company's chief executive, was in upbeat mood despite the profits warning issued the previous week by the parent company.

In fact, Siemens' UK businesses are

doing rather well compared with the rest of the group. Return on capital averages 20 per cent against a group target of 8.5 per cent, and the UK boasts the leanest corporate structure of any of Siemens' European operations. Siemens' silicon chip plant on Tyneside is as efficient and competitive as anything the company has in Taiwan or the former East Germany. Although the collapse in chip prices has forced it to scrap the second phase of the Tyneside development, Siemens is getting almost as much production from phase one as the entire project had been

budgeted to make. Mr Wood's masters in Munich seem reasonably satisfied. Indeed Siemens plc with its Anglo-Saxon approach to management and financing, looks like becoming the role model for how things will increasingly be done back home.

What a contrast it's Munich neighbour BMW provided two days later. BMW announced that its Rover car subsidiary is axing 1,500 workers, moving on a four-day week and shifting £1bn worth of component orders from UK to overseas suppliers. BMW insists the cutbacks have been forced on it by the strength of the pound; yet Siemens says it has no plans to retrench in the UK. All of which lends weight to the suspicion that BMW is using the exchange rate as a smokescreen to push through productivity improvements and shake up its supply base.

Rover says the 200/400 line at Longbridge is equal to the best in Europe and not far off Japanese levels of efficiency. The latest Treasury research paints a different picture, suggesting that productivity levels among UK car producers are still only half those in Japan.

For years British exporters have covered over this productivity gap with the help of low wages and a weak exchange

rate. Now the gap has been exposed, they should be using the strength of sterling as a stimulus to improve productivity, not as an excuse to whinge. In this respect Siemens could teach BMW a lesson or two.

Black and white striped blunder

FREDDY'S BACK, and the nightmare at St James's Park continues. The return of Freddy Shepherd and Douglas Hall to the board of Newcastle United Football Club is as depressing as it was predictable. Apparently, the board of the plc has checked out its reserve powers only to discover there isn't much it can do when the two men who control 65 per cent of the shares decide they want their ball back.

So the striking partnership of Shepherd and Hall return during the close season as chairman and deputy chairman of the football club, hoping the fans have forgiven if not forgotten their behaviour during that unfortunate away fixture in Spain.

The pic chairman Denis Cassidy is on a free transfer from Liberty, another family-controlled company which likes to

change its board like football teams change their strip. Like all managers, however, he believes in a new season and a new start. But the omens do not look good. Even when he has signed another non-executive to the plc board, the independent directors will still be outnumbered by executive directors and nominees of the two controlling shareholders. The attempt to integrate the boards of the plc and the football club, meanwhile, look like a half-hearted attempt at best to cramp the style of Freddy and Douglas.

The deadly duo have written to ticket holders this weekend apologising once more for the events of last March and setting out their plans for the future. Unfortunately these contain no hint of when they will reduce their shareholdings to below 50 per cent or failing that, when they will take the club private again.

With shares languishing at 74p, compared with a flotation price a year ago of 135p, neither exit route is possible at the moment. To add to their woes, supporters have the prospect to look forward to of France's only World Cup flop, Stephane Guivarch, turning out in three weeks' time. All in all, the new season looks like being as depressing on the field as off it.

Services suffer but GDP keeps up pace

BY LEA PATERSON

1998, so the sector is technically in recession. The news ONS data did not provide a precise estimate of manufacturing growth in the second quarter.

Analysts were divided on the impact of the figures on the UK interest-rate outlook, with some predicting that rates would have to rise to curb inflationary pressures, and others saying the Bank of England had done enough to bring inflation down. Most experts agree there is little chance of a cut in rates when the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meets in a fortnight's time.

Adam Cole, from HSBC Securities, said: "On balance we still expect the August MPC meeting to leave rates on hold, but there is a clear risk of a further increase, particularly given the proximity of the August Inflation Report."

Sterling was little changed following publication of the data, but rose later in the day to close at DM2.95, up more than half a pfennig from yesterday's close.

Economists at ABN Amro commented: "A bounce in oil and utilities production and a continued modest easing in services output are the key features. MPC 'doves' will be encouraged by weaker services growth but the next MPC meeting will be finely balanced."

But the Prime Minister Tony Blair said: "We still have a fundamentally strong economic position."

Excluding oil and gas, GDP growth slowed slightly, down

from 0.6 per cent in the first quarter to 0.4 per cent in the second. Within the services sector, distribution, hotels and catering grew by just 0.1 per cent, reflecting the slowdown in retail sales, according to Mr Cole from HSBC.

Although the ONS is yet to release estimates of second-quarter manufacturing growth, Francis Maude, the shadow Chancellor, said the figures "confirmed that manufacturing risks slipping further into recession. It is more likely than ever before that manufacturing will show a third consecutive quarter of declining output."

But the Prime Minister Tony Blair said: "We still have a fundamentally strong economic position."

IN BRIEF

Eurotunnel plans Calais shops

EUROTUNNEL yesterday announced plans to develop 27,500 square metres of land next to the Calais terminal, attracted by the transport facilities and the sharp price differences between the UK and France.

Permit is being sought for 15,000 square metres of factory shops, to be operated by a third party, and a 12,500 square foot store for Castorla, a well-known French chain selling DIY goods and gardening equipment.

Eurotunnel also revealed that total cross-Channel traffic was up 15 per cent a year in the second quarter, while the freight market was up 32 per cent. Rail freight business was only 3 per cent higher because of the French train drivers strike in April this year but Eurostar passenger traffic was up 12 per cent a year to 1.69 million.

Adidas let-down

ADIDAS yesterday became the latest sportswear firm to report disappointing profits. Shares in Adidas-Salomon plunged in Frankfurt after sales of its golf equipment suffered in the US and Japan. Adidas merged with the French sports equipment firm Salomon in February, hoping to tap into booming sales in golf clubs. But the Salomon division suffered from disappointing performances.

Hopes of more bids had other waters producing something approaching a maelstrom of excitement. Yorkshire Water rose 46.5p to 548.5p; South West Water 81p to 1,128.5p and Anglian 51p to 920p.

The bigger companies were also in demand. Thames put on 19p to 1,135p and Severn Trent 25p to 1,054p.

Others in the swim included mixed water and electricity groups like United Utilities, up 4p to 922p, and Scottish Power, up 16p to 600p. Hyder gained 45.5p to 1,040p.

Among pure electricity groups to be charged by the Euro initiative were Scottish Hydro Electricity, up 20.5p at

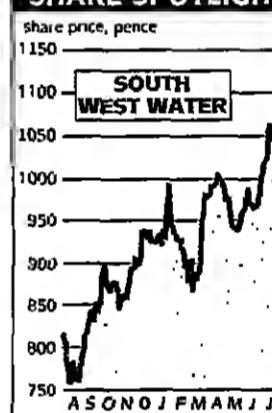
Utilities escape the deep despair

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

SHARE SPOTLIGHT



Source: Business Week

THERE IS nothing like a surprise takeover bid to offer a little inspiration. As the stock market continued to wallow in gloom, with Footsie off 83.9 points to 5,892.3, utilities romped ahead following the £1.4b bid for Wessex Water.

Wessex splashed 118.5p

higher to 611.5p against the 630p offered out by the US Enron Corporation.

The Americans have been

avid buyers of electricity companies but Wessex represents the first US assault on a water business.

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BURN STEWART, the

Scotch whisky group,

tumbled 2p to an 11p low.

The shares once hit 144p.

The group suffered a £2.4m

interim loss and endured

further hardship in the half

month which ended last

month.

In a bid to improve its

margin it sharply

increased its prices earlier

this year. Since embarking

on such a policy the shares

have come from around

30p, indicating the

market's lack of confidence in

the success of its

manoeuvre.

54p and Ulster group Viridian,

7.5p higher at 611.5p.

Southern Electric, the last

of the 12 privatised electricity

companies to retain its inde-

pendence, slipped 1p to 576p.

There has been a steady

flow of profit warnings in

the past year. But the Imperial

Chemical Industries alert on

Thursday, together with the

caution, even despair, ex-

pressed by others, has

smashed confidence.

After hitting a high on Mon-

day Footsie has fallen nearly

300 points. The supporting in-

dices, too, have been weak.

Yesterday the mid cap fell 52.3

to 5,520.6 and the small cap 30

to 2,520.

With the market braced for

more profit warnings. Bow-

thorpe, the electronics group,

fused 24.4p to 46.5p on rumours

of a cautious statement.

The best performing blue

chip was British Aerospace, up

27p to 513p. Reports of defence

merger talks with Daimler-Benz

Aerospace prompted the ex-

citement, heightening specula-

tion the oft-quoted BAE merger

with General Electric Co could be

back on the agenda.

Now that the deal has been off-

loaded, the market has

been left to digest the

news.

Elsewhere it was deep de-

spair. The market was in no

mood to attempt to recover from

the stream of profit warn-

ings. With sterling still stro

ng and Asia still in crisis it is

SPORT

Crazy mixed-up feelings in the mixed zone

ONE OF my colleagues, who shall remain nameless... obviously he has a name, but I won't use it... anyway, this colleague came up with possibly the purest response I know of to the frustrations of what we toilers after truth call "the mixed zone". What you may ask, is a mixed zone when it's at home? Well the first thing to say is that a mixed zone is never at home. It is always somewhere else, usually in a large sports stadium, through an unmarked door and down a long twisting flight of stairs full of people busting back up them, the people who have already found the mixed zone and used it for its proper purpose.

What, you may ask, with increasing impatience, is the proper purpose of the mixed zone? The official response would be that a mixed zone is a neutral area where

sporting protagonists congregate after their competition so that members of the sporting press may canvass their opinions.

But I have pondered over this question for some years now, and the conclusion I have formed is this: a mixed zone is a device to bring frustration into the life of the sportswriter. "How so?" I hear you ask. Or was that "bloody get on with it"? Well, let me tell you how it was in the Stadio Olimpico the other week. As the 400 metres runners in the Rome grand prix meeting crossed the line, with Michael Johnson first and three Britons in his wake, I left my position high up in the stand and made my way to the press desk, where I asked the way to the mixed zone.

I was led by a helpful attendant along a corridor, around a corner and into a room full of empty chairs

with an empty table on a podium at one end of it, at which point my guide became uncertain and disappeared through a side door like the white rabbit.

Doubling back, I made my way along the outside of the stadium until I found a likely doorway which I was prevented from entering by a young man with a blazer and a badge. He indicated another doorway further along, which I entered, and discovered led to a corridor containing three more doors. All of them locked.

Doubling back, I returned to the press desk and, happily, encountered the press chief, who pointed me towards an unmarked door—of course!—through which there was the inevitable twisting flight of stairs and—yes—people racing upwards...

It was as if walking in at the end of a party. Johnson, America's world



MIKE
ROWBOTTOM

and Olympic champion, was leaving his kit gathered in his hands. This was not a mixed zone; it was a twilit zone.

But even being in the right place at the right time, or well before it, is no guarantee of avoiding that

teeth-grinding sensation. After a big race at an event like the Olympics, the barriers which separate the arriving athletes from the flood tide of reporters seem with activity—and sometimes, anger.

The also-rans are always the first to arrive—no television or radio reporters have bothered to detain them further up the line. And as they slumped down on the changing benches, mentally reviewing the failure they have just experienced, starting the infinitely laborious business of removing their spikes and getting into their tracksuits, perhaps letting out the odd stifled cry, there is an awkward silence.

We are crowded in front of them, but we do not want to talk to them. Sometimes, out of sheer embarrassment, you engage someone in conversation. But this entails the

risk that when the star performer arrives, you will be embroiled in a discussion you don't need. It's not nice, but there it is.

When the object of everyone's desire arrives, there is a shameless scramble. Those lucky few who find themselves wedged against the rail where the athlete is standing are in immediate danger of losing their ears as hands bearing tape recorders thrust forward either side of their heads.

Unless you are in the front two or three ranks of straining bodies you cannot hear anything. Of course, there will be a press conference later on, conducted haltingly with questions in English and German, or English and French, or English and Russian. Later on, when your deadline has passed.

There is no alternative but to be here, in an old-fashioned football crowd where, if no one is passing down the back of your leg, they are using your shoulder as a writing table or digging their elbow into your side.

It is hardly surprising that in such circumstances, tempers fray. What pushed my colleague beyond the brink at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics was the overbearing presence of a large American television cameraman bearing a large overbearing camera in the way that television cameramen do.

After two verbal warnings, my friend—a small Welshman, in his 60s, with a fine knowledge of all aspects of boxing—gave expression to his feelings in the form of a right hook.

Not nice, but there it is. In retrospect, a welcome blow for the freedom of the press.

Trent Bridge memories: In 1965 Peter and Graeme Pollock were the key to a famous South African Test victory

Pollocks' part in the birth of golden era

BY ADAM SZRETER

WHEN SHAUN POLLACK took the field at Trent Bridge for the fourth Test against England that began on Thursday, it was in the knowledge that on the same ground 33 years ago, his father Peter and uncle Graeme shared one of their finest hours together in the all-too-brief period that they graced cricket's world stage on South Africa's behalf.

The occasion was the second Test of a three-match series and the sides arrived in Nottingham after a thrilling game at Lord's had ended all-square. During that match a ball from Peter Pollock, the older brother, was three years and regarded as the best fast bowler outside the Caribbean, had hit John Edrich on the head. "It was always going to be a good contest and England looked the likely winners," Pollock said, "but it turned around after that and by the end England were having to put the shutters up."

Under MJK Smith's captaincy, England were on a run of 14 Tests unbeaten, including a 1-0 series win in South Africa the previous winter, but they were now having to make do without Ted Dexter who had broken his leg in a car accident earlier in the summer. The

squad to tour England again five years later but the tour was cancelled at the eleventh hour and South Africa did not return to Test cricket for more than 20 years.

"In those days I was a little bit superstitious about watching him," his brother said, "and I actually hid at the back of the dressing-room for most of the innings. When I did finally come out, it was to see him get out. There was a little bit of controversy; he didn't think he actually hit it—but the TV cameras showed that he did—but he wasn't so happy to go and he usually was quite keen to walk. But I missed most of it and watched it on TV later that evening. It was also our mother's birthday, and by the end of the day he'd got a hundred and I'd knocked over the first two England wickets."

Thanks to Graeme Pollock, South Africa had recovered to 269 all out before his brother took over. "I was essentially a fast bowler who bowled big away-swingers," he said. One of those away-swingers accounted for the young Geoffrey Boycott, caught behind for a second-ball duck, and then Ken Barrington was bowled for one to put England in trouble at stumps. On the following day Colin Cowdrey scored a century to rescue England in the same way as Graeme Pollock had done for his side, but Peter Pollock finished with 5 for 53 to restrict England to 240.

Half-centuries in the second innings by Barlow, Ali Bacher and Graeme Pollock—who made 59—set England a target of 319 to win but once again Peter Pollock struck an early blow, removing Bob Barber for one before the end of the third day. In truth, England never really recovered—Boycott took two hours 20 minutes to make 16, exactly the same amount of time Graeme Pollock had taken over his 125. Only Peter Parfitt took the fight to the South Africans but when he was last out, bowled by Peter

Pollock for 86, South Africa had won by 94 runs. Pollock finished with 5 for 34 in the second innings and is still the only South African to have taken 10 wickets in a Test match in England.

"That game effectively won the series for us," he said. The final Test, at The Oval, was

drawn and so South Africa won a series in England for the second time, and the only time since the war. "It was a dramatic turning point for South African cricket," Peter Pollock added. "To come to England and beat England was always the dream. It was regarded as the ultimate achievement and the next

five years became perhaps the greatest period in South African cricket history. But, you know, for a lot of our cricketers of that generation that finally got isolated, the team that is regarded as the best South Africa as ever produced, they would all agree that it all started at Trent Bridge."

In his capacity as convenor of the South African selectors, Peter Pollock will be back to watch a Test match at Trent Bridge today for the first time, and will have the pleasure of watching his son Shaun attempting to emulate his father's bowling and his uncle's batting.

"If in 1965 someone had told me that, in 33 years' time, you'll be here to watch your son playing for South Africa—well, it would have seemed a bit of a tall order to me," Peter Pollock said. I suggested we should hope for another such match. "Yes, it was a fine game of cricket," he said.



Graeme (left) and Peter Pollock on the 1965 tour which brought South Africa their only post-war Test series victory in England. *Hulton Getty*



Peter Pollock at Trent Bridge this week Peter Jay

De Mulder shows early pace

SAILING

BY STUART ALEXANDER
in Cowes

AFTER TESTING weather in the two days of inshore races in the Solent, the 27 yachts in the Rolex Commodores' Cup were facing the problem of coaxing best performances over 175 miles of light conditions in the Channel race last night.

There were just five knots of westerly breeze at the start of Cowes as they headed west towards Poole before turning back up the Channel to Brighton, with England's Red

team 40-footer Victric 5 showing some early pace in the hands of Tony de Mulder.

Need to make something of a comeback from their fourth position overall, the England team were hoping experience would pay. But also wanting to make amends were the German Red team, who saw their top place in the nine, three-boat teams taken away from them by Netherlands' Red.

The German small boat,

Harald Bruning's Topas, was successfully protested by the Netherlands' Green team's top-scoring boat, Koerd Jansen's old 43-footer Cisoe. "He seemed nervous, angry and upset, especially after being disqualified for a collision with US Virgin Islands America's Cup skipper Peter Holmberg," said a spokesman. "He

was making mistakes he would not normally make."

Italy's Giovanni Soldini is expected to win the Atlantic Alone Race from Falmouth to Charleston tomorrow. His Open 60, Fila, had slowed to just over six knots with 450 miles to go yesterday, but he was still over 700 miles ahead of Britain's Mike Golding in Group 4, despite the Hampshire man's new 1.1m yacht averaging over 11 knots.

Another Briton, Mike Garde,

was threatening in the Open 50 class, his Alpina Magellan less than 90 miles behind US-based Frenchman Jean-Pierre Moulligne in Cray Valley. "Pressure, hell at that age I didn't know how to wipe my backside," An American spectator on the plinth of the new professional golfer Justin Rose. "I've had no offers yet but I am available." Justin Rose waiting by the telephone for the sponsorship deals to come in. "He may look like a gangly kid but he is incredibly strong. Just look at his hands. They are capable of strangling a tiger." Hercules? No, Justin Rose, according to his manager... his father, Ken. "If Tiger wants a sip from this claret jug, he'll be more than welcome." Mark O'Meara invites his friend Tiger Woods round to see his new ornament.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

"I saw Dick Advocaat sitting with his head in his hands when it was 3-0, and that was worth the admission money alone."

The Shepherds' coach, Dermot Keely, could not help looking on the bright side after Advocaat's Rangers came back to beat his side 5-3.

"I would fight Embank and I would class it as unfinished business and I need to get it out of my system."

Irish boxer Steve Collins gives his approval to any plans regarding Collins v Embank III.

"Although I always thought golf was a poof's game, I now like it more than football."

West Ham's Julian Dicks looks for a

career elsewhere if he cannot recover from his knee injury.

"We are very stupid and we apologise unreservedly for our behaviour," Reinstated Newcastle chairman Freddie Shepherd relies on the Toon Army's generosity to forgive and forget.

"It's the first century I've got since I got married, so I'm blaming it on that." Novel reasoning by South Africa cricket captain Hansie Cronje.

"We are fed up with being treated like cattle. So we are going to behave like cattle."

Laurent, 'albert speaks for the riders as they temporarily boycotted the start of the 12th stage of the Tour de France amid more doping allegations.'

TODAY
FOOTBALL
MATCHES 110

Patriarch to keep the tyros in check

Two unbeaten colts in pursuit of a champion's crown may fall to an older rival. By Richard Edmondson

THERE IS a final vacancy for a champion in the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes at Ascot this afternoon and two horses struggling to get their name in the register.

High-Rise and Royal Anthem are both unbeaten three-year-olds, both chasing the sash of being the best horse in Europe. Much is at stake, and the winners' prize will be dwarfed by its potential value at stud.

High-Rise was such an outsider before the Derby that there is a desire to see him do it again before elevating the colt to exalted status. The Derby winner has contested six of the last 10 King Georges and started favourite on each occasion. Luca Cumani's colt will be attempting to become a Nashwan, Generous or Lammata, horses who completed the double, rather than the failed triumvirate of Commander In Chief, Erhaab and Shaamit.

Those at Cumani's Bedford House stables have no doubt about High-Rise's merit and they know a good horse when they see one. Kahyasi also brought them the Derby 10 years ago and High-Rise now occupies the same box as his Blue Riband predecessor at the Newmarket yard. Kahyasi's racing plates are hammered up on the door and High-Rise's may soon join them in the shrine. Whether they go above or below will be determined this afternoon.

If High-Rise is victorious today he is unlikely to qualify as the best transport. Olivier Peslier has enjoyed the ride of his life on the Frenchman. The rider of Helios and Peintre Celebre is nevertheless anticipating the establishment of yet another European champion. "He is a very great horse and he is in good form," the Frenchman said yesterday. "He's strong and he likes the fighting. He fights very well. If he wins the King George he will be the best horse in Europe."

This belief may ignore the claims of Dream Well, the notable absentee from this afternoon's championship. He beat City Honours in the Irish Derby by further than High-Rise managed at Epsom, though this is not a factor which troubles Peslier greatly. "Dream Well needs the ground soft and he is not the same with good ground."

The jockey is more troubled by the collision with a different generation. "Now it is the competition with the old horses," he

said.

Indeed, this expectation about the Classic crop means there could well be advantage elsewhere.

Godolphin seem numerically well-placed to step in with

Four King George wins count for little as a former champion adapts to fresh roles. By Sue Montgomery

I know I'm not an expert and I do get apprehensive.

"People watch TV commentators and think that's easy. I could do that. It's only when you try to do it that you realise how difficult it is. The hardest thing is to stay relaxed and try to remember the points you want to get across without drying up or gabbling like a maniac."

"When you're 19 it's easy to learn," he said. "At that age, what you're being taught sticks. But once you're older it takes longer. It's really more difficult to absorb things. And I forget names; I know the horse I'm talking about, I can see it in my mind, but I forget its bloody name. But I'm happy to say at least I don't feel the job is getting harder."

"Today, with a large TV audience guaranteed for the race than is second in status only to



The Daylami dilemma: Will the Eclipse Stakes winner stay the trip at Ascot today?

Julian Herbert/Allsport

three runners, but there are doubts about each of their entries. Swain has not won in five outings since he captured this contest 12 months ago and the suggestion remains that such a murderous contest has dulled his competitive edge for ever. Daylami tries this distance for

the first time and may be panting dreadfully as he comes past the stands, while Happy Valentine is described by his camp as a "pace-setter".

This guaranteed swift tempo means there are serious possibilities about unheralded older horses in the contest. Romanov

has beaten Silver Patriarch twice this year, once when he had a weight concession and again when the run of race was against John Dunlop's colt.

Certainly the Arundel camp go into the King George without a sense of inferiority: "The horse is very, very well and so

there is all to play for," Dunlop said yesterday. "He gets the mile and a half really well and we want a strong gallop."

Team Arundel will get that and it is worth speculating they will attract the garlands as well. SILVER PATRIARCH (map 3.50) is the value choice.



Carson: Showing rapid improvement like his charge Royal Anthem

Alistair Macdonald

the Derby in Britain's Flat racing calendar will be one of Carson's biggest tests. And as a four-time winner of the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes on Dick Hern-trained horses, he should have much to share with his viewers.

Carson won two Derby winners, Troy and Nashwan, so will be able to relate to the pressures being experienced by High-Rise's connections. He scored on the classy four-year-old, Ela-Mama-Mou, who, like Daylami, was stepping up in class after winning the Eclipse.

But it is the 1985 winner, Petoski, the least fancied of the quartet when he won, that he picks as being the most memorable. "He was the one," he said. "He wasn't a hot pot like the others, but I did go there thinking I had a great chance. He was very much on the upgrade."

"And he beat six Group One winners that day. Petoski was a great big horse who had taken time to reach his potential.

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Which brings us neatly to another of today's runners, Royal Anthem, another great big progressive three-year-old stuffed full of potential. Carson is one of the team associated with the

colt, owned by United States-based Ahmed Salman's Thoroughbred Corporation. "I'm called the racing manager," chuckled Carson, "but I think that means I make the tea."

"We don't know if Royal Anthem is good enough to win this."

But he is one of the few in the race who is certain to improve on what he's done already."

Shows potential, sure to improve, could be very good. Like horse, like TV pundit.

Presenting a new test for Carson to conquer

IT MAY not be possible to teach an old dog new tricks but Willie Carson, irrepressible yappy little terrier that he is, is doing his darndest to learn 'em. At the age of 55 he has started over, trading, like so many sportsmen before him, the field of play for the micro-phone.

It is a transition that some make seamlessly but, as the World Cup panels showed, the ability to keep on running in a Liverpool and Newcastle shirt is no guarantee of success as a talking head. Carson, now in his second year with the BBC, quickly grasped that the job is no sinecure.

"Riding I knew," he said. "I was in control, I knew what to do, whether it was a selling plate or the Derby. It was what I did, and even when it was difficult, I could do it."

"Interviews then were OK, because there was no pressure. But being on this side, the side I am now, is a bit different. I'm still learning how to do it;

Carson's heart is clearly in

Progressing from searing gallops performances to race-course proficiency is rather like doing a best man's speech. In front of the long bedroom mirror on your own it's usually fluent and cohesive, but before the shocking presence of an audience it can be all a bit different.

There was no sign of the deflation to come, though, when Killer Instinct entered the parade ring yesterday. He looked as well-muscled and imposing

as his father, Zafonic, had as a juvenile, rather like the sort of three-year-olds he has been thrashing on the gallops. He shone with a finish which would have made an army corporal proud.

At action's start, Killer Instinct jinked right before being stuck in behind the pace-making no-hoper Gold Honor. The stride was extravagant, the hooves pawed the air. A furiously long out he was in front, but there was no explosion, rather

a fizz. Compton Admiral scooted up the outside. The 4.9 favourite appeared rather slow.

"At home he's got cruising speed and he quickens up very well but today, I suppose, first time up, he was just ready for a race," Cecil observed. "The idea was to give him a lead, teach him something, and then let him quicken up. But when he went to quicken up he was looking around and he didn't really put it together."

"I think he's better than that

and next time you'll see a better horse than you did today. I'm sure it's there and let's hope next time he does it."

A more desperate intervention came from the colt's owner, Prince Ahmed Salman. "I promise you he will win the 2,000 Guineas," he said on departure. "You can take my word for that." You had to feel rather sorry for him.

Yesterday's results and today's evening cards, page 24

Killer Instinct sinks on maiden voyage

BY RICHARD EDMONDSON
at Ascot

HE CAME, he saw, he capitulated. Killer Instinct, the emperor of the Newmarket gallops, found the real thing all too much on his racecourse debut here yesterday. All the reports of his home prowess suddenly seemed rather silly as he trundled home behind Compton Admiral.

Killer Instinct went into the EBF Maiden Stakes as a 10-1

favourite for the 1999 2,000 Guineas. He came out of it looking almost as sad as his trainer, Henry Cecil. Coral, who must have been looking the other way, now 12-1 for the Guineas next spring. The Tote are more realistic at 20-1.

The reality was that Killer Instinct ran rather like a big, old boat. Those who have believed the radiant reports which have emanated from Headquarters have attached themselves to an equine Titanic.

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as his father, Zafonic, had as a juvenile, rather like the sort of three-year-olds he has been thrashing on the gallops. He shone with a finish which would have made an army corporal proud.

At action's start, Killer Instinct jinked right before being stuck in behind the pace-making no-hoper Gold Honor. The stride was extravagant, the hooves pawed the air. A furiously long out he was in front, but there was no explosion, rather

a fizz. Compton Admiral scooted up the outside. The 4.9 favourite appeared rather slow.

"At home he's got cruising speed and he quickens up very well but today, I suppose, first time up, he was just ready for a race," Cecil observed. "The idea was to give him a lead, teach him something, and then let him quicken up. But when he went to quicken up he was looking around and he didn't really put it together."

"I think he's better than that

and next time you'll see a better horse than you did today. I'm sure it's there and let's hope next time he does it."

A more desperate intervention came from the colt's owner, Prince Ahmed Salman. "I promise you he will win the 2,000 Guineas," he said on departure. "You can take my word for that." You had to feel rather sorry for him.

Yesterday's results and today's evening cards, page 24

3.50 KING GEORGE VI AND QUEEN ELIZABETH DIAMOND STAKES (Group 1) (CLASS A)		BBC1
1 323-91 DAYLAMI (21) 4yo 9st 7d		N J Kneze 4
Owner: Godolphin Trainer: Seabed bin Sunco		
Classed leader over 22 out, led over 11 out, hard ridden and ran on well when beating Faithful in the Group One Eclipse Stakes at Sandown		
(m 21, good) and in the Coronet Park 6f lengths back in third place. Previously led over 22 out and outpaced over 21 out, rallied and not much room out in both last two starts.		
led first and outpaced over 21 out, rallied well when half a length third in the Group Two Prince Of Wales Stakes at Royal Ascot (m 21, good) to stop		
Going v Distance v Form rating 125 Time rating 122		
2 1751 HAPPY VALENTINE (24) 4yo 9st 7d		O'Donnell 3
Owner: Godolphin Trainer: Seabed bin Sunco		
Always prominent, led over 22 out, ran when led and won when		
beating Faithful in Love & Loyalty in the Listed Movements Stakes at Sandown		
(m 21, good) to soft last time on. Previously won when beaten over 22 out, weakened over 21 out, rallied when beaten when 22 lengths seventh to Yorkshire in the Listed Astley Park Stakes at Newbury (m 21, 100yds, good).		
Going v Distance v Form rating 111 Time rating 111		
3 323-21 ROMANOV (27) 4yo 9st 7d		J Reid 1
Owner: R Sangster Trainer: P Chapple-Hyam		
Led after 4, headed over 20yds out, ran when led and won when		
beating Faithful in the Group One Grand Prix de Paris at Chantilly (m 21, good) to soft last time on. Previously won when beaten over 21 out, rallied when beaten when 22 lengths second to Happy Valentine in the Group Two Jockey Club Stakes at Newmarket (m 21, good).		
Going v Distance v Form rating 117 Time rating 117		
4 321-21 SILVER PATRIARCH (27) 4yo 9st 7d		P Edney 7
Owner: Peter S Winstanley Trainer: J Durkin		
Always close up, went second after 4f, hard ridden over 21 out, every chance		
when 2 lengths behind to Parditioner on one place when 5f lengths fourth to Parditioner in the Group One Grand Prix de Paris at Chantilly (m 21, good) to soft last time on. Previously won when beaten over 21 out, rallied when beaten when 22 lengths second to Happy Valentine in the Group Two Jockey Club Stakes at Newmarket (m 21, good).		
Going v Distance v Form rating 117 Time rating 117		
5 137-22 SWAIN (29) 4yo 9st 8h		L Detton 5
Owner: Godolphin Trainer: Seabed bin Sunco		
Held up, led over 21 out, ridden over 1f, headed into final furlong, not quickened when two lengths behind to Parditioner in the Group One Two Handed Stakes at Sandown (m 21, good) to soft last time on. Previously won when beaten over 21 out, rallied when beaten when 22 lengths second to Happy Valentine in the Group One Coronation Cup at Epsom (m 21, good).		
Going v Distance v Form rating 123 Time rating 123		
7 1-11 HIGH-RISE (49) 3yo 9st 8h		P Peslier 2
Owner: Sheikh Mohamed Ghazi Al Maktoum Trainer: L Clement		
Held up in the race, 10th straight, good headway over 21 out, led 11 out, at		
when beating City Honours by a head in the Group One Derby Stakes at Epsom (m 21, good) last time out. Previously won when beaten over 21 out, rallied when beaten when 22 lengths second to Sardan by a nose in the Group Three Lingfield Derby Trial Stakes at Lingfield (m 21, good).		
Going v Distance v Form rating 102 Time rating 102		
9 11		

Austrian Grand Prix: McLaren's flying Scot in the driving seat after wise words from former world champion

Mansell puts Coulthard in racing trim

BY DERICK ALLSOP
at Zeltweg

DAVID COULTHARD was back on top yesterday, albeit by a thousandth of a second, and he was relaxed, smiling, glowing almost. Just as he was a fortnight ago.

This time the Scot must sustain his form through the entire weekend and win tomorrow's Austrian Grand Prix here if he is to be a contender for the drivers' world championship, but at least the anger and frustration of Silverstone appeared to have evaporated.

For that he credits, in no small part, the former champion Nigel Mansell, who administered words of encouragement after a recent golf day.

Coulthard, who edged out Benetton's Giancarlo Fisichella in practice, trails Mika Hakkinen, his McLaren-Mercedes team-mate, by 26 points and Ferrari's Michael Schumacher by 24 after spinning out of the British Grand Prix.

Sussex a fair target for Starborough

STARBOROUGH, runner-up to All-Royal in last season's Sussex Stakes, heads a list of 13 horses confirmed yesterday for this year's renewal at Goodwood on Wednesday.

Formerly with David Loder, Starborough joined Godolphin at the end of last term but has had only one race for the Dubai team when a below-par sixth over a mile and a quarter in Hong Kong in April.

Sheikh Mohammed's operation also have Fly To The Stars in the one-mile contest and this improving four-year-old will be going to post on the back of a game head victory in a French Group Three.

Godolphin's top miler Intikhab, impressive winner of the Queen Anne Stakes at Royal Ascot last time, bypasses Good-

wood in favour of a crack at the Prix Jacques le Marois at Deauville on 16 August.

Simon Crisford, racing manager to Godolphin, said: "After Royal Ascot the plan was always to go for the le Marois with Intikhab. We haven't finalised Goodwood plans yet but Starborough is a probable runner."

Henry Cecil has Bold Fact in the race as well as Porto Fericos, supplemented at a cost of £18,000. At Ascot yesterday, Cecil said: "Porto Fericos has worked well and that's why he has been supplemented. It's a big step but he's an improving three-year-old and we'll see what happens."

SUSSEX STAKES: Latest odds (Corby): 1-5 Starborough (2-2 Lend a Hand); 1-5 Victory Note (1-2 Fly To The Stars); 1-5 Intikhab; 1-5 Bold Fact; 1-5 Maka, Tarscan; 1-5 Mutharuk; 1-5 Centra 2000; 2-5 Mucke.

RACING RESULTS

ASCOT

2.05: 15/6 (2yo maiden stakes)
1. CAPE GRACE ... Dano O'Neill 33-1
2. Circle of Gold ... Reid 8-11 fav
3. Ras Sharsh ... Mills 10-11
Also ran: 5-1 Intza (4th); 7-1 Ramka (6th); 20-1 Yabut El Shab (5th).

8 ran, shd. 1. 5, shd. nk. (winner bay filly by *Brook of Salton*, trained by R. Hart) and 1. 5, shd. nk. (winner grey filly by *Evening Star*, trained by S. S. S. Tote). Total: £220, 11D. Dual Forecast: £1390. CFS: £3209.

2.45: 15/6 (handicap)

1. SANDBAGGED AGAIN ... M J Kinnane 11-2 fav

2. Oliver ... T. Culkin 20-1

3. The Blues Academy A McCarthy 15-1

Also ran: 11-2 1st Princess Topaz (6th);

15-2 Captain Jack (5th); 8-1 Jaws; 9-1 Sir de la Haye (2nd); 1-1 Whitehaven; 1-1 Marchion (4th); 10-1 Kinnane, 20-1

Spring Dances; 25-1 General Assembly; 4 de Lirite, Little Acon.

15 ran, 4-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1. (Winner bay gelding by *Prince Daniel* out of *Parcels*, trained by McEnroe) at Sheriff Hutton for Mrs Christopher Hutton. Total: £300. 100, 65D. Dual Forecast: £1640. CFS: £1223. Total: £14931.

3.15: 15/6 (handicap)

1. BLESSINGINDISGUE ... M J Kinnane 4-1 fav

2. Bayleaf ... J. Reid 20-1

3. Divine Miss P ... N. Collan 14-1

Also ran: 5-1 Elans Lad (6th); 8-2 Litterary Society (6th); 1-1 Bradey (6th); 10-1 Prince Domine, Royal Party, Speed, On 2-1 Willow Day; 4-1 Sybil (4th); 20-1 Jiggy (6th); 25-1 The Puzzler.

13 ran, 4-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1. (Winner bay gelding by *Kalek Shikari* out of *Blowing Bubbles*, trained by Mick Eastley at Sheriff Hutton for A. G. Black) at Sheriff Hutton. Total: £300. 100, 65D. Dual Forecast: £1640. CFS: £1223. Total: £14932. (Results stand after a stewards' inquiry).

3.45: (15/6 handicap 3yo)

1. MR CAHILL ... J. Reid 9-3 fav

2. Prasertan Gold ... R. Hughes 11-2

3. Grimaldi ... N. Collan 15-1

Also ran: 9-2 1st Faro (6th); 8-1 Intikhab; 1-1 Whitehaven; 1-1 (2nd); 8-1 As A Puzzler (6th); 8-1 Canadian Puzzler; 10-1 My Puzzler

9 ran, 4-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1. (Winner bay gelding by *Carroll* out of *Symmetric*, trained by Michael Shute) at Newmarket for Mr. Tom Tom (Mr. Tom Tom) Total: £100. 23D. Dual Forecast: £120. CFS: £105. Total: £14932.

4.25: (15/6 maiden stakes 2yo)

1. COMPTON ADMIRER Pad 1 P. Doherty 7-2

2. Kitter ... M J Kinnane 4-1 fav

3. Ismean ... W R Swinburn 11-1

Also ran: 10-1 Raed (6th); 50-1 Gold Honor (6th).

5 ran, 4-1, 5, 5, 5. (Winner bay colt by *Swan Dancer* out of *Sumatra*, trained by Gérard Beller) at Docto for E. Penseur. Total: £400. 12D. Dual Forecast: £160. CFS: £105. Total: £14932. (Results stand after a stewards' inquiry).

5.30: (15/6 handicap 3yo)

1. MR CAHILL ... J. Reid 9-3 fav

2. Prasertan Gold ... R. Hughes 11-2

3. Grimaldi ... N. Collan 15-1

Also ran: 9-2 1st Faro (6th); 8-1 Intikhab; 1-1 Whitehaven; 1-1 (2nd); 8-1 As A Puzzler (6th); 8-1 Canadian Puzzler; 10-1 My Puzzler

9 ran, 4-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1. (Winner bay colt by *Carroll* out of *Symmetric*, trained by Michael Shute) at Newmarket for Mr. Tom Tom (Mr. Tom Tom) Total: £100. 23D. Dual Forecast: £120. CFS: £105. Total: £14932.

Jackpot: Not won. Pool of £20,000,000 carried forward to Ascot today.

Placem: £56,650. Outplace: £40,30

Place: 6- £20,105. Place: 5- £144,212

circumstances to work in my favour. One point from four races is not the scoring rate for championships. But if I win a couple of races, who knows?"

Coulthard was at the forefront all day, but his experience at Silverstone has cautioned him against excessive emotion or expectation.

"It's the next two days that matter," he said. "I've got to sustain it and not let my frustration get the better of me if there are problems. Above all, I've got to get to the chequered flag."

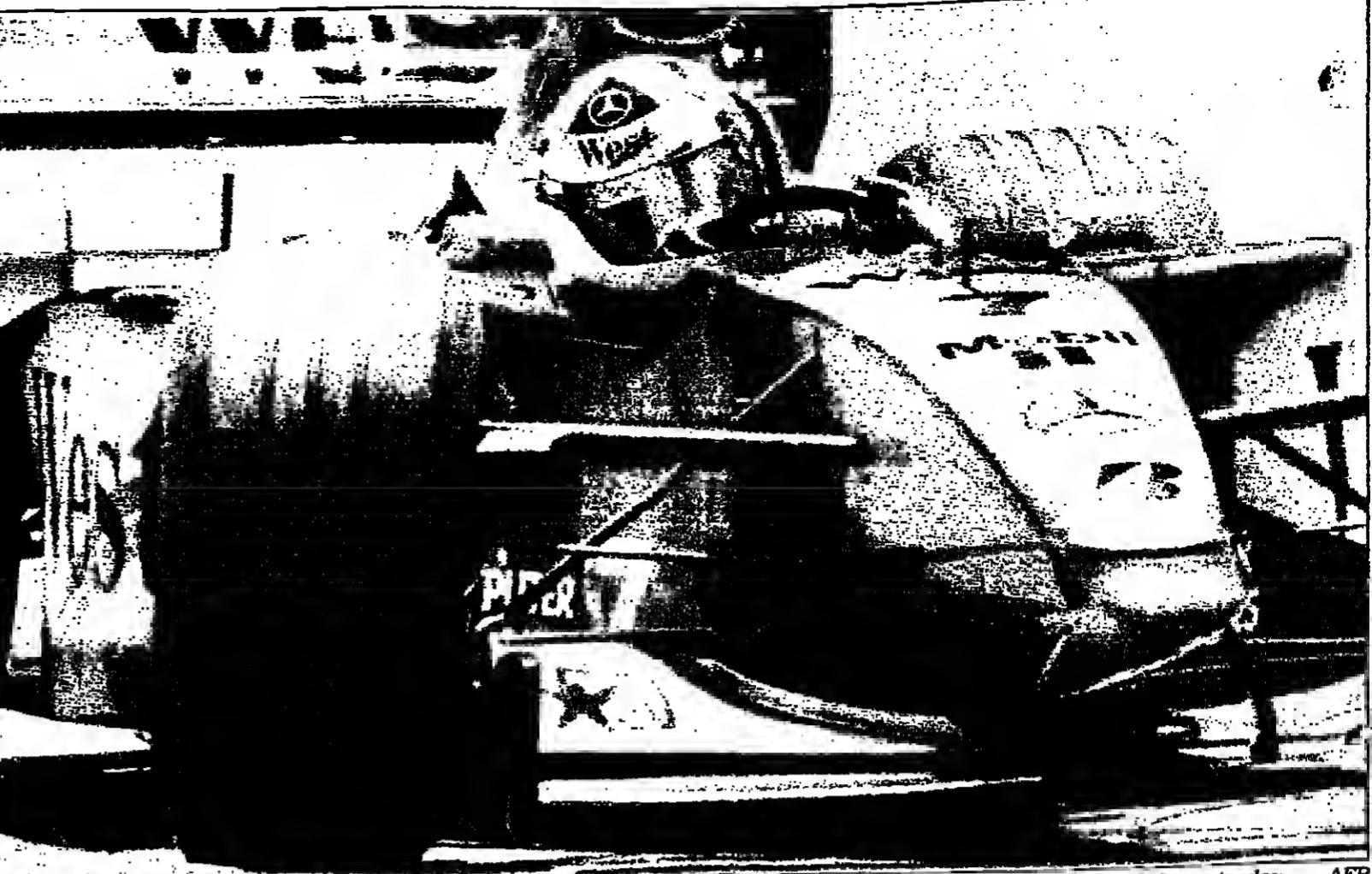
Benetton suggested all day

they might muscle in on the

customary McLaren-Ferrari fight here. Alexander Wurz, making his home debut, looked strong also, although he was ultimately bumped down to sixth, from 11th, in the gravel trap and mechanics had to work on the car. I had a similar problem with the wheel locking in the afternoon. We have a lot of work to do to be competitive in qualifying."

Benetton have quietly gone about their work in the shadow of McLaren and Ferrari and have occasionally flattered to deceive. But they have scored consistently and Wurz is particularly keen to demonstrate his potential in front of his compatriots.

Herbert's form is timely in



McLaren's David Coulthard rides the kerb on the way to setting the fastest time in practice for the Austrian Grand Prix yesterday. AFP

team-mate, Eddie Irvine. "We had a few more difficulties than expected," Schumacher said. "I locked a wheel and went off into the gravel trap and mechanics had to work on the car. I had a similar problem with the wheel locking in the afternoon. We have a lot of work to do to be competitive in qualifying."

Benetton have quietly gone about their work in the shadow of McLaren and Ferrari and have occasionally flattered to deceive. But they have scored consistently and Wurz is particularly keen to demonstrate his potential in front of his compatriots.

Herbert's form is timely in

view of his row with Sauber at Silverstone. He is looking for a new drive and Williams, among others, may have taken note yesterday. Not that the Englishman was totally happy. "The car wasn't quite what I wanted," he said. "But overall I'm encouraged, especially as my quickest lap was my last when I was running on well-used tyres."

Damon Hill, still being linked with a move to the new BAR team, was ninth.

AUSTRIAN GRAND PRIX (Zeltweg):

Times from yesterday's free practice session: 1. D Coulthard (GB) 1:15.70; 2. G Fisichella (It) 1:15.70; 3. J. Wurz (Aust) 1:15.70; 4. J. Herbert (GB) Sauber-Mercedes 1:14.70; 5. B. Badoer (Br) Williams 1:14.70; 6. A. Wurz (Aust) Benetton-Ford 1:14.30; 7. D. Wurz (Aust) Benetton-Ford 1:14.30; 8. M. Schumacher (Ger) Fer-

nan 1:14.41; 9. B. E. Irvine (GB) Ferrari 1:14.52; 10. J. Alesi (It) Jordan-Honda 1:14.52; 11. T. Trulli (It) Prost-Peugeot 1:14.68; 12. O. Panis (Fr) Prost-Peugeot 1:14.70; 13. J. Villeneuve (Can) Williams 1:14.82; 14. S. Cecotto (Fr) Williams 1:15.17; 15. Y. Takagi (Japan) Tyrrell-Ford 1:15.23; 16. H. Frentzen (Ger) Williams-Mercedes 1:15.34; 17. M. Salo (Fin) Arrows-Yamaha 1:15.66; 18. N. Mansell (GB) Williams 1:15.70; 19. M. Schumacher (Ger) Williams-Yamaha 1:15.70; 20. J. Villeneuve (Can) Williams 1:15.70; 21. D. Coulthard (GB) McLaren 1:15.70; 22. G. Fisichella (It) Williams 1:15.70; 23. H. Frentzen (Ger) Williams-Yamaha 1:15.70; 24. J. Herbert (GB) Sauber-Mercedes 1:15.70; 25. B. Badoer (Br) Williams 1:15.70; 26. A. Wurz (Aust) Benetton-Ford 1:15.70; 27. D. Wurz (Aust) Benetton-Ford 1:15.70; 28. M. Schumacher (Ger) Fer-

nan 1:15.70; 29. B. E. Irvine (GB) Ferrari 1:15.70; 30. J. Alesi (It) Jordan-Honda 1:15.70; 31. T. Trulli (It) Prost-Peugeot 1:15.70; 32. O. Panis (Fr) Prost-Peugeot 1:15.70; 33. S. Cecotto (Fr) Williams 1:15.70; 34. M. Salo (Fin) Arrows-Yamaha 1:15.70; 35. H. Frentzen (Ger) Williams-Yamaha 1:15.70; 36. N. Mansell (GB) Williams 1:15.70; 37. D. Coulthard (GB) McLaren 1:15.70; 38. G. Fisichella (It) Williams 1:15.70; 39. J. Herbert (GB) Sauber-Mercedes 1:15.70; 40. B. Badoer (Br) Williams 1:15.70; 41. A. Wurz (Aust) Benetton-Ford 1:15.70; 42. D. Wurz (Aust) Benetton-Ford 1:15.70; 43. M. Schumacher (Ger) Williams-Yamaha 1:15.70; 44. J. Villeneuve (Can) Williams 1:15.70; 45. B. E. Irvine (GB) Ferrari 1:15.70; 46. S. Cecotto (Fr) Williams 1:15.70; 47. H. Frentzen (Ger) Williams-Yamaha 1:15.70; 48. M. Salo (Fin) Arrows-Yamaha 1:15.70; 49. T. Trulli (It) Prost-Peugeot 1:15.70; 50. O. Panis (Fr) Prost-Peugeot 1:15.70; 51. J. Alesi (It) Jordan-Honda 1:15.70; 52. D. Coulthard (GB) McLaren 1:15.70; 53. G. Fisichella (It) Williams 1:15.70; 54. H. Frentzen (Ger) Williams-Yamaha 1:15.70; 55. B. Badoer (Br) Williams 1:15.70; 56. A. Wurz (Aust) Benetton-Ford 1:15.70; 57. D. Wurz (Aust) Benetton-Ford 1:15.70; 58. M. Schumacher (Ger) Williams-Yamaha 1:15.70; 59. J. Herbert (GB) Sauber-Mercedes 1:15.70; 60. S. Cecotto (Fr) Williams 1:15.70; 61. H. Frentzen (Ger) Williams-Yamaha 1:15.70; 62. O. Panis (Fr) Prost-Peugeot 1:15.70; 63. T. Trulli (It) Prost-Peugeot 1:15.70; 64. M. Salo (Fin) Arrows-Yamaha 1:15.70; 65. J. Villeneuve (Can) Williams 1:15.70; 66. B. E. Irvine (GB) Ferrari 1:15.70; 67. G. Fisichella (It) Williams 1:15.70; 68. D. Coulthard (GB) McLaren 1:15.70; 69. H. Frentzen (Ger) Williams-Yamaha 1:15.70; 70. O. Panis (Fr) Prost-Peugeot 1:15.70; 71. T. Trulli (It) Prost-Peugeot 1:15.70; 72. M. Salo (Fin) Arrows-Yamaha 1:15.70; 73. J. Villeneuve (Can) Williams 1:15.70; 74. B. Badoer (Br) Williams 1:15.70; 75. A. Wurz (Aust) Benetton-Ford 1:15.70; 76. D. Wurz (Aust) Benetton-Ford 1:15.70; 77. M. Schumacher (Ger) Williams-Yamaha 1:15.70; 78. J. Herbert (GB) Sauber-Mercedes 1:15.70; 79. G. Fisichella (It) Williams 1:15.70; 80. H. Frentzen (Ger) Williams-Yamaha 1:15.70; 81. O. Panis (Fr) Prost-Peugeot 1:15.70; 82. T. Trulli (It) Prost-Peugeot 1:15.70; 83. M. Salo (Fin) Arrows-Yamaha 1:15.70; 84. J. Villeneuve (Can) Williams 1:15.70; 85. B. Badoer (Br) Williams 1:15.70; 86. A. Wurz (Aust) Benetton-Ford 1:15.70; 87. D. Wurz (Aust) Benetton-Ford 1:15.70; 88. M. Schumacher (Ger) Williams-Yamaha 1:15.70; 89. J. Herbert (GB) Sauber-Mercedes 1:15.70; 90. G. Fisichella (It) Williams 1:15.70; 91. H. Frentzen (Ger) Williams-Yamaha 1:15.70; 92. O. Panis (Fr) Prost-Peugeot 1:15.70; 93. T. Trulli (It) Prost-Peugeot 1:15.70; 94. M. Salo (Fin) Arrows-Yamaha 1:15.70; 95. J. Villeneuve (Can) Williams 1:15.70; 96. B. Badoer (Br) Williams 1:15.70; 97. A. Wurz (Aust) Benetton-Ford 1:15.70; 98. D. Wurz (Aust) Benetton-Ford 1:15.70; 99. M. Schumacher (Ger) Williams-Yamaha 1:15.70; 100. J. Herbert (GB) Sauber-Mercedes 1:15.70; 101. G. Fisichella (It) Williams 1:15.70; 102. H. Frentzen (Ger) Williams-Yamaha 1:15.70; 103. O. Panis (Fr) Prost-Peugeot 1:15.70; 104. T. Trulli (It) Prost-Peugeot 1:15.70; 105. M. Salo (Fin) Arrows-Yamaha 1:15.70; 106. J. Villeneuve (Can) Williams 1:15.70; 107. B. Badoer (Br) Williams 1:15.70; 108. A. Wurz (Aust) Benetton-Ford 1:15.70; 1

Rose pruned after fightback

GOLF

By TIM GLOVER
in Hilversum

JUSTIN ROSE endured the unkindest cut after staging an impressive recovery in the TNT Dutch Open here yesterday. The 17-year-old, playing in his first professional tournament after finishing fourth in the Open, followed a 77 in the first round with a 65 but missed the half-way cut by a stroke.

Although he won £25 in Wednesday's pro-am he did not receive a gilder from the prize fund of £300,000. And he needs official prize-money more than anything else.

Rose, relying on sponsors in-vitations (no problems there, the world and his dog are after him) needs to win £55,000 to secure his card for the European

Tour next season. The alternative is the dreaded qualifying school.

If Rose was disappointed by yesterday's cruel developments, the had to wait five hours before learning of his fate he disguised it well.

"It may have happened for a reason, I can go home and have a couple of days' rest which might be the best thing. I wanted a good round, I hit too many bad shots in the first round and didn't play anything like I can. I said to my dad walking to the first tee that it was not likely that we'd make the cut, but it was not impossible."

Rose, who would have won £70,000 at Birkdale had he not been an amateur, was left to rue a drive into the trees at the 15th, one of the few wayward shots of his round. "I was a bit cross with myself there,"

he said. He probably muttered something like: "Oh bother".

The Roses return home today and Justin will be in Stockholm next week for the Volvo Scandinavian Masters on a course designed by Nick Faldo. While in Sweden, the boy wonder will celebrate his 18th birthday.

"What I've learned," Rose said, "is that the first round is

SECOND-ROUND SCORES

TNT DUTCH OPEN (Hilversum). Early leading second-round scores (GB or M unless stated): 129: Westwood 63 66; 133 N Price (Zen) 68 65; 139 P Wallen 68 67; 139 G Lofland (Aus) 67 67; 140 L Lees 68 65; 141 C Ferrer (Fra) 67 65; 142 C Rocca (It) 71 65; 145 S McAllister 68 68; M Farry (Fra) 69 67; P Haugrud (Nor) 67 67; R Jackson (GB) 68 68; J Huston (USA) 68 67; 147 P Gosselin (Can) 68 67; 148 M Garbett 68 69; S Timling (Den) 70 67; M Gortz 68 67 70; P Fuller (Swed) 71 65; M Moulain 70 67; P Syland (Swed) 67 66; M McGuire 68 67; 149 J Doherty 68 66; M McIlroy (Nz) 73 65; O Gifford 71 67; J Remsey (Fra) 68 70; 149 P Hengg (Swed) 70 69; K Brink (Swed) 69 70; A Oldcorn 69 70; P Mitchell 68 71; G Brandt 69 70; M James 70 69; A Color 71 68; M Rose 71 68; P Lawrie 67 72; R Boast 70 69; 140 M Gronberg (Swe) 70 70; Bickerton 69 71; G Westerberg 70 69; 142 J Sorenson 70 69; 143 P Howlett 71 69; R Lockett (Aus) 70 70; A Sandywell 72 68; R Dickson (Neth) 70 70; G Turner (Nz) 71 69; 141 S Henderson 71 70; P O'Malley (Aus) 71 71; 142 J Sorenson 70 70; 143 P O'Farrell 71 70; T Gullif (US) 71 70; 144 M Reale (It) 72 69; M Lander (Swed) 69 72; S Ballisteros (Sp) 68 70; 145 M Doherty 70 70; 146 J Poulter 72 70; A Hunter 72 70; R Clayton 71 71; 143 M Davis 76 67; O Chopra (Swe) 74 69; R Coles 71 72; P Golding 71 72; T Johnstone (Zen) 71 72.

Mickelson, who carded a 74 after a first round of 68. Mickelson said he had a sleepless night after learning of the death in London of Remay Appleby, the wife of the Florida-based Australian golfer Stuart Appleby. "We were close friends and I only spoke to her last week," Mickelson said.

The Australian Stephen Leaney, joint leader with Lee Westwood at 13 under-par at the half-way stage, equalled the course record with a 63, despite being in what he described as a "state of shock" on hearing the news of Mrs Appleby's death.

Nick Price was on the leaderboard following a 65 that contained seven birdies and his putting got better as the round progressed. "What I've tried to do is to hold the putter just off the ground very slightly and it seems to smooth my

back swing. I used to have the putter a little too firmly behind the ball and this seems to have made a big difference."

"It's such a fickle thing putting. I feel comfortable now. Price was blown off course at Royal Birkdale, scoring 82 in the third round. "My swing didn't suffer too much," the Zimbabwean said. "I haven't lost any sleep over it."

Westwood, the leading money-winner in Europe this year, was also blown away in the Open, finishing 76, 78. That did not bother him either, but then nothing seems to perturb the 25-year-old from Worksop. After the Dutch Open he has two weeks off, during which he will "laze about, watch television and tidy the garage".

Larry Barber, from Arizona, who asked for an invitation here after failing to qualify for



Rose waits to hear if he has made the cut Allsport

the Open, had a hole in one at the fifth. However, Barber missed the cut although he did not go away empty-handed. He

won a bicycle for his ace. When the organisers told Barber "on your bike", they meant it in the nicest possible way.

Davies chases a first in Sweden

LAURA DAVIES powered her way to the head of the leaderboard as a strong wind sent scores soaring in the second round of the Chrysler Open at Sjögarde, Gothenburg, yesterday.

The British former world No 1 shot a two-under 71 - the only sub-par score of the early starters - to finish on three-under 143 and a shot ahead of Australia's former Open champion, Karen Lunn.

She started at the 10th, and an eagle three at the 437 yards 15th where she hit a nine-iron second to 12 feet was the highlight of a round that also contained two birdies. But she was upset to three-putt, missing the second from two feet, to drop a shot at the long eighth.

"It was really stupid," Davies said. "The conditions were really tough and it was quite a battle. But now I'm feeling good for the weekend. I've never won in Sweden and I'm feeling much happier about my game than I was earlier in the season. The putting's working much better and I'll now be going all out for the win."

Jackie Crowe, the Scot who had led the British challenge on the first day with a 71, slipped down the field with an 80 while Lunn made progress with a level-par 73.

Jack Nicklaus, chasing a third United States Senior Open championship at the Riviera Country Club in Los Angeles, was limping noticeably through the first round of the tournament.

After a three-over-par 74 in the first round, he admitted that he would probably make this his last tournament of the year.

Nicklaus - revealed he has had trouble with his hip for 35 years. "I am going to make it my last event of the year so I can figure out what to do," he said.

Although he hinted later that he may change his mind, hip replacement surgery seems likely in the near future.

Nicklaus, 58, attempting to become the oldest winner of the Senior Open, was one-over through 14 holes, but compiled a double-bogey six on 15, a birdie four at 17, and a bogey five at 18.

Jay Sigel, who played in the same threesome with Nicklaus, had an even-par 71 over 18 holes.

"Jack looks uncomfortable even walking," Sigel said. "It is painful to watch him. He played very, very well. In many cases he played better than I did. He's a champion, to say the least."

Nicklaus did not agree with Sigel's assessment of his game. "I played what I thought was a fairly poor round," he said. "I only hit eight greens, you're not going to play very well."

"Par will be a wonderful score at the end of the week," Bob Murphy said after also finishing level in a round that included an eagle three on the first hole, a double-bogey six on the third hole, four bogeys and four birdies.

Sigel had three birdies and three bogeys and Hugh Baoeche, also finishing in par had five birdies and five bogeys.

A shot off the pace and in the clubhouse were John Grace, Bill King, Tom Shaw, Ed Dougherty, Isao Aoki and Brian Barnes.

The Seniors' Tour earnings leader, Hale Irwin, shot a 77, his worst round of the year.

Tour de France: Overshadowed by protests and police inquiries a Belgian records his second win

Riders stage sit-down protest

By ROBIN NICHOLL

RIDERS IN the scandal-racked Tour de France revolted yesterday. They threatened to quit the world's greatest race following the confession of Laurent Jalabert, the world champion, that he had been using the blood-enhancing drug EPO for two years.

Hardly a kilometre after leaving the ceremonial start in Tarascon-sur-Ariège the pack of 148 stopped in protest after Laurent Jalabert, the world No 1, had expressed their feelings about their sport on Radio Tour.

"If nobody is interested in racing then we will go home and you can go on without us," the French champion said. "Since sport has now become secondary and we are treated like cattle, we have decided not to race."

The Tour was delayed for two hours with riders sitting in the road before racing began 16km into the 222km route to Le Cap d'Aigues on the Mediterranean coast.

"You should start out of respect for the spectators and the gendarmes deployed along the route," Jean-Marie Lehmann, the Tour director said and after lengthy roadside discussions between officials, riders, and team managers the riders decided to race.

Bachard had confessed along with fellow Frenchman Christophe Moreau and the Swiss rider Armin Meier. They were released by police at Lyons.

Later the other Festina riders - Richard Virenque, Pascal Hervé, Didier Rous (all France), Laurent Dufaux, Alex Zulle (Switzerland) and Neil



Laurent Jalabert (left) discusses with colleagues the decision to strike which delayed yesterday's 12th stage of this year's Tour AFP

Stephens (Australia) - left the police headquarters.

Meier was angry at his treatment by police. "They made me strip naked, and I spent two hours in a cell, not knowing what was going to happen," he said.

"I told them that I had taken EPO, and I feel better for saying so. Now perhaps something good will come out of it for the good of the sport."

Meier added that Zulle had talked of quitting cycling following the scandal.

"Cycling should seize this rare chance to reform itself," Roger Legeay, the GAN manager and leader of the directeur sportifs (team managers), said.

"To bring more sponsors and bigger crowds it should be seen to be free of doping."

Midway through the race Lehmann issued a severe warning to the Dutch team, TVM.

"We are extremely vigilantly following the inquiry into your team."

"If it is proved that your team has not respected the regulations and the ethics of the Tour and the Union Cycliste Internationale they will be excluded from the Tour."

This threat came after Philippe Laumone, the deputy prosecutor at Rethmes, said that banned products had been found when Customs searched the hotel rooms of TVM at Pamiers on Thursday.

They took away five TVM staff including Cees Piem, the team manager, for questioning.

Laumone said that they could not say exactly what was found because the labels were in Russian.

Prem and Alexandrei Mikhailov, the team doctor, were still being held for questioning.

in the police headquarters at Pamiers on Thursday said it had been the most traumatic experience in his life.

"It is logical that they should have asked me to testify. I told them what I have been telling you all week - that we had nothing to do with it," he said.

The riders' demonstration yesterday echoes that of 32 years ago when riders stopped

in Pamiers, southern France, yesterday afternoon.

"It is very annoying, very difficult. I hope we can make it to Paris. I want to concentrate on the race and forget about all this," said TVM sprinter Jeroen Blijlevens, before yesterday's stage finally got underway.

The riders' demonstration yesterday echoes that of 32 years ago when riders stopped

racing five kilometres after the start of the Bordeaux-Bayonne stage. Then it was in protest at the introduction of full scale doping controls.

On that occasion doctors and lawyers entered riders' rooms and demanded on-the-spot samples of their urine.

Yesterday, the race went on with Belgium's Tom Steels clutching his second mass sprint win since Dublin, 12 days previously, when the Festina affair was confined to a Belgian masseur, Willy Voet, being caught by Customs with 400 vials of banned products.

Almost in protest the riders yesterday allowed Laurent Jalabert and his younger brother, Nicolas, to break clear with the Dutchman Bart Vostamps. They gained 4min 50sec and

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Joynt is keen to keep his record

RUGBY LEAGUE

By Ian Laybourn

JOE JOYNT is aiming to preserve a proud record when he ends St Helens into battle with his biggest rivals, Wigan, in tomorrow evening's Super League Roadshow finale at

Swansea. Saints are one of the few teams genuinely capable of oppressing the Super League eaders.

Although Wigan have won last five games between the sides, Saints are one of the few teams genuinely capable of oppressing the Super League eaders.

"I've been at Saints for six years and every season we've won at least one game against them," said Joynt, who was born and bred in Wigan and still lives in the town.

The sides have met three times this season, with Wigan taking their old foes out of the Challenge Cup and competing in a League double.

Unless the teams meet in the Grand Final play-offs, the game at the Vetch Field will be Joynt's last chance to maintain his enviable record.

Wigan will the clear-cut favourites, having beaten St Helens 38-14 in their last match three weeks ago, their seventh successive Super League win, and have the chance to open up a two-point lead over their nearest rivals, Leeds.

"All credit to Wigan, they're playing very well," Joynt said. "The only way we can beat them is to match them in every aspect and we've worked on areas that we think we can improve on."

"It's 17 versus 17 and I'm a firm believer that, whoever wants it most on the day will win the game."

The match brings the curtain down on the series of six Roadshow fixtures and there should be no finer advertisement for the game.

Both sides can boast 10 British internationals and an fine array of overseas talent

and there will be the fierce passions associated with the biggest rugby league derby of them all.

John Monie, the Wigan coach, said: "There is a lot of extra feeling. It's always a tough encounter."

Wigan's strength is illustrated by the presence on the bench of their newest international, Lee Gilmour, while St Helens are boosted by the return of Bobbie Goulding, who missed the defeat on 5 July with a torn calf muscle.

South Wales' other Super League fixture, tonight's match between Warrington and Castleford at the Arms Park in Cardiff, might lack a derby atmosphere but it promises to provide an intriguing contest.

Darryl van de Velde, the Warrington coach, enjoyed a five-year spell at Castleford, where he steered them to Yorkshire Cup success and an appearance at Wembley.

The Wolves appear to have the advantage, having overcome their early-season disasters to rekindle hopes of claiming a top-five play-off place.

A seventh successive win over the Yorkshire side will take Warrington, who have already gained one win over the Tigers this season, to within a point of St Helens in fifth place.

Castleford have lost four of their last five matches but, like the majority of teams in action this weekend, are close to full strength following the mid-season break.

Stuart Raper, the Castleford coach, said: "We are going down there for the weekend but the 80 minutes against Warrington are the most important of the weekend and we have got to make sure we are prepared well to have a chance of winning.

"After the recent break, we are starting from scratch again and we have got to try to win every game from here."

Two dismissals at bankrupt Bristol

RUGBY UNION

ANDY BRASSINGTON, Bristol's director of marketing and commerce, has become the first casualty since the club was placed in the hands of receivers on Thursday.

Michael Stevenson, of the Salisbury-based chartered accountants Smith and Williamson, has dismissed Brassington and his assistant, Rachael Anniss, just 24 hours after being called in.

Brassington said: "I am bitterly disappointed to be leaving because I believe that rugby in Bristol, under the right management, has the potential to rise again to its former glory."

Brassington joined the rugby club two years ago after holding a similar post with Gloucestershire County Cricket Club.

Bristol's managers have come in for more criticism from players, angry that the receivers were called in less than a week after they were warned that the club could fold if the wage bill was not cut by £400,000.

Phil Adams, who has been with the club since 1984, said the club's current situation was "a complete nightmare".

"We know that we didn't play well last season and we got into a losing habit, but if any business goes bust, you have to look at the people at the top," he said.

Adams was particularly angry for the players who had joined the club - relegated to Allied Dunbar Premiership Two last season - recently. "They came because it's Bristol and because people promised certain things which haven't been fulfilled," he said.

Ivanov, a six-time guard and hero of Birmingham's Buderus Challenge semi-final with over 100 career last season, Flommy has reportedly also been offered a one-year deal.

Leicester Riders are hoping to re-sign Jason Boone, who had initially informed to leave British basketball and try out for the NBA.

The Edinburgh coach, Jim Brandon, is said to be on the point of finalising deals with guard Ted Berry and centre Brandon Graves, both of whom have been offered Michael Dawson and Thames Valley guard

Leigh Westwood to Valley Parade after the clubs finally agreed a fee of £150,000 for the 21-year-old defender.

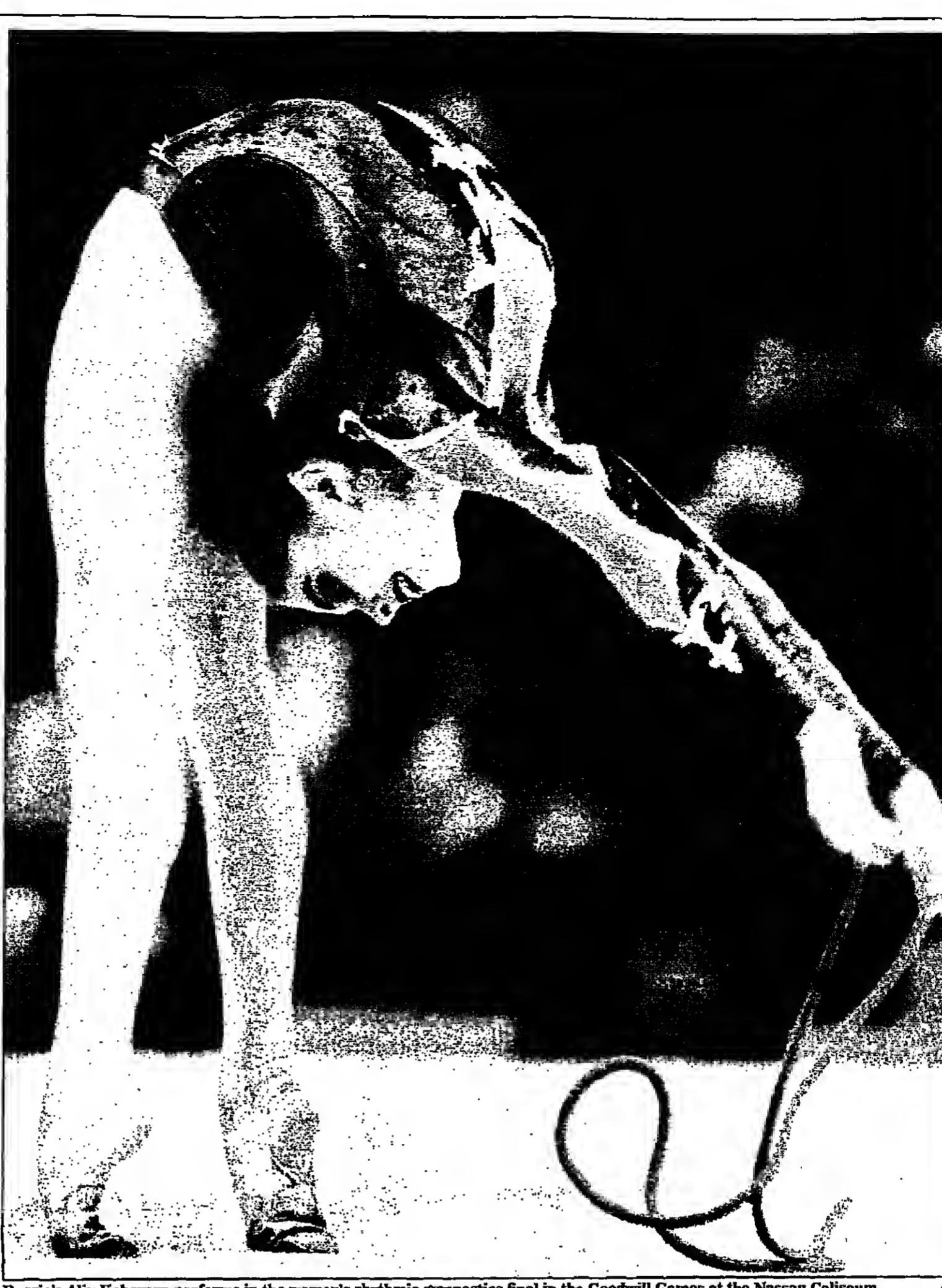
Hope Powell, England women's national coach, takes charge of her first game in tomorrow's friendly against Sweden at Dagenham and Redbridge.

Dynamo Tbilisi, the Georgian side, were awarded a 3-0 defeat victory in KF Vardar yesterday after the Albanian team had an ineligible player in Wednesday's European Cup qualifying first leg match.

Herbie Hide will make a second defence of his WBO heavyweight title against Germany's Willi Fischer, at the Norwich Sports Village on 29 August.

FOOTBALL

Bradford have completed the signing of the midfielder Gareth Whalley from Crewe for £500,000. Whalley, 24, becomes Paul Jewell's fourth signing of the summer and follows his former team-mate Ash-



Russia's Alin Kabayeva performs in the women's rhythmic gymnastics final in the Goodwill Games at the Nassau Coliseum AP

Four-medal haul revives Ivankov

GOODWILL GAMES

By John McHaffey
in New York

IVAN IVANKOV overcame chronic fatigue to win gold in the high bar and silver on the parallel in the gymnastics at the Goodwill Games.

The Belarussian confirmed he is the most complete all-round male gymnast in the world with medals in each of the four events in which he competed this week.

"I am very happy with how I performed here, but now I want to rest," he said. "Everyone is tired. It is the end of a long season."

Ivankov mastered his fatigue to perform several difficult moves on the high bar event to win with 9.725 points.

In the other men's final Ivankov took the silver with a smooth performance on the parallel bars. He was bettered

only by the Chinese Huang Xu who scored 9.725.

A row behind the scenes about the judging, thought by some teams to unduly favour the United States, appeared to escalate on Thursday.

Gymnastics officials reported that a delegate from the Romanian team had threatened on Wednesday to pull the squad out of the meeting. On Thursday night, though, no Romanian gymnasts had been withdrawn from this weekend's mixed pairs event.

The paralysed Chinese gymnast Sang Lan was due to begin treatment with an experimental nerve regenerating drug, the chief medical officer for the Goodwill Games said on Thursday.

Sang, China's 17-year-old national vault champion, was injured on Tuesday when she landed on her neck while warming up for the competition at Nassau Coliseum.

The Australian coach, Dr Brock Schnebel said Sang's condition remained the same, with no movement in her lower extremities.

"We showed Sang Lan her X-rays, and explained in more detail the extent of what has happened to her," Schnebel said. "We also reviewed her treatment choices, particularly the surgical option which should be performed soon to stabilise her vertebrae.

"She has begun to realise the seriousness of her injuries, but is still demonstrating the same courage as she did when she first arrived."

Australia and the United States reached the gold medal game of the basketball tournament with convincing victories on Thursday night.

Australia got 21 points from

Shane Heal and 20 from Anthony Ronaldson to beat Puerto Rico 86-74 and the young US team beat Lithuania 89-76.

The Australian coach,

Barry Barnes, admitted he had got exactly what he wanted. "I think there can be nothing better than to play in Madison Square Garden in New York City," he said.

Australia opened the second half with a 14-0 run that swelled their lead to 17-10 the largest of the game. Chris Anstey of the NBA's Dallas Mavericks had four points and two steals and Ronaldson made two three-pointers.

Ronaldson's output took the pressure off the team's high-scoring guard duo of Heal and Andrew Gaze, who had a relatively quiet 15 points.

The Puerto Rican centre Jose Ortiz, who led all scorers with 23 points, criticised the refereeing. Ortiz fouled out with 7:06 left in the game as Puerto Rico had just seven free throws to 29 for Australia.

Ortiz singled out the American referee. "I don't think he has been very professional or

fair," Ortiz claimed. "Even though we beat the United States in the first round, we didn't want to offend him, if that's the case, I don't think he should be here doing that kind of job."

His team-mate Jerome Minty said: "They were able to play more physical with us and they were calling the fouls on us. When we tried to retaliate at the same level they wouldn't call the fouls on them. I think it was a little lopsided."

The Puerto Rican coach, Carlos Morales, said the game was a valuable pointer before the World Championships, which start next week in Greece.

"We think Australia are one of the contenders for a medal at the World Championships," he said, naming Yugoslavia, Greece, Russia and Lithuania as others. "We think we can play with all of those teams."

EUROPEAN UNDER-16 CHAMPIONSHIPS

RESULTS

WEEKEND REVIEW

COMMENT • FEATURES • ARTS • SHOPPING • TRAVEL



Tom Pilson

Postcards from the hedge

Our fast-disappearing hedgerows are far more than shelters for bees, butterflies and skylarks – they trace the contours of our past

BY TERENCE BLACKER

At the great demonstration, show of strength and general knees-up that was this year's Countryside Rally, a wide variety of concerns was on display. Farmers asserted their right to receive government subsidies. Country sports enthusiasts asserted

their right to chase animals. Landowners asserted their right to prevent ramblers roaming across the countryside and disturbing ground-nesting birds breeding for the next shooting season. William Hague and Michael Heseltine, clad in immaculate Jermyn Street country kit, asserted the right of politicians to jump on any bandwagon that happened to be passing.

One overriding principle united this rainbow alliance of rural interests: the right of country-dwellers to look after the countryside themselves without restriction or hasty interference from Westminster. For centuries, they had been custodians of the landscape, and the 77 per cent of the British landscape in agricultural use was still safe

in their hands. Nowhere is the fragility of this argument revealed more starkly than in the fate of our hedgerows, on which a parliamentary working party set up 12 months ago by Michael Meacher, the Minister of the Environment, reported last week. Since 1945, when the Agriculture Act first put a premium on food production – a process accelerated by the Common Agricultural Policy – 150,000 miles of hedge have been grubbed up.

A 1994 survey by the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology revealed that between 1981 and 1993 almost 110,000 miles had been lost in England and Wales alone. The loss every year between 1990 and 1993 was more than 15,000 miles.

Behind these figures lies a deep ideological di-

vide over the role of the countryside in the past and the future. Traditionally, members of the farming lobby – not so much medium-sized farmers as the vast agribusinesses, for whom land is primarily a site of production – have claimed that much of the environmental and cultural concern at what is being done to the hedgerows is alarmist and sentimental. The landscape is constantly evolving, the argument goes; it makes no more sense to yearn for a lost Arcadia of bees, butterflies, skylarks and cider with Rosie than it does to long for horse-drawn carriages and gas lamps. The parts of the country, notably in East Anglia, where, at this time of the year, thousands of acres of arable land are unbroken by verges, hedgerows or rough land, reveal the

countryside at its cleanest, most efficient and most productive, thanks to advances in farming machinery and biotechnology. Moreover, most of the landscape in the lowland zone of England and Wales is the product of the last 250 years, following the Enclosure Acts.

This last argument, once supported by respectable academics, was definitively disproved in 1974 by a method of dating hedges devised by Dr Max Hooper. The best indicator of a hedge's age, he showed, was the number of shrub and tree species: in a 30-yard hedge, each woody species (not including undershrubs such as brambles or woody climbers such as ivy and clematis) represented roughly 100 years of history. So a study of the

hedgerows of Shropshire showed that a third dated from 1100 to 1350, and another third developed before 1650. In Devon, more than a quarter of hedges were more than 800 years old. Some Anglo-Saxon hedges recorded in the 10th century survive today.

In other words, the hedgerows that over the past 50 years we have been grubbing up at an unprecedented rate in the rush for government-subsidised agricultural growth are the articulation of thousands of years of our history. Some are "assarts", the relics of ancient woodlands, others originated from scrub growth along previously un-hedged boundaries, others were planted as mixed- or single-species hedges delineating property. Over the centuries, trees and woodland have formed an important part of our national sense of self – what Simon Schama described in *Landscape and Memory* as "sylvan patriotism"; today our hedgerows represent continuity, a connection with our past relationship to the land which, like an ancient hedge, cannot, once it has been removed, ever be replaced. In his landmark work *A History of*

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UNDERPANTS
TO LAST
MONTHS!





Sellafield's future

Sir: Your leading article "A simple solution for Sellafield: shut it down" (23 July), contained much sense. But this was spoiled by some factual inaccuracies, along with an oversimplification of the problem.

Sellafield was established as a nuclear research and development complex in November 1947 with the construction of the plutonium production "piles". What the Queen opened at the site in October 1956 was the successor plutonium production reactors, named Calder Hall, which also produced expensive electricity as a spin-off.

Someone wrote for Her Majesty the following words in her opening ceremony speech: "Future generations will judge us, above all else, by the way in which we will use these limitless opportunities which Providence has given us." No mention whatever was made of the primarily military function of the reactors or Sellafield's role in nuclear weapons generally.

Today Sellafield is a multi-purpose sprawling site with a complicated array of nuclear management functions, including the handling and storage of many different radioactive waste types in solid, liquid and gaseous forms. It is neither sensible nor possible to shut it down. What could and should be assessed is the rationale and consequences of continued reprocessing of spent fuel which gives rise to the vast bulk and array of wastes at the site.

The last Labour Party conference in October passed a resolution calling upon the Government to conduct a review of reprocessing. It is one of the few policy options it has not yet subjected to review, despite the known misgivings of some ministers.

What is undoubtedly true is that Sellafield, far from closing, will provide one of the few industrial sites certain to secure significant employment throughout the next century as it cleans up the radioactive legacy of this one.

Dr DAVID LOWRY

Stoneleigh, Surrey

Sir: Your report "Nuclear fears for 2000 hug" (23 July) states that a serious accident could occur in the nuclear industry because of the "millennium bug".

In fact the British nuclear industry already has in place, and has had for some considerable time, programmes of work to address the issues of Year 2000 preparedness. The work programme includes the thorough systematic investigation, testing and assurance of all process control, safety and business systems. Modifications or replacement of components or systems will be undertaken if found to be necessary. These programmes have also been subject to external review and are reviewed with the industry regulators.

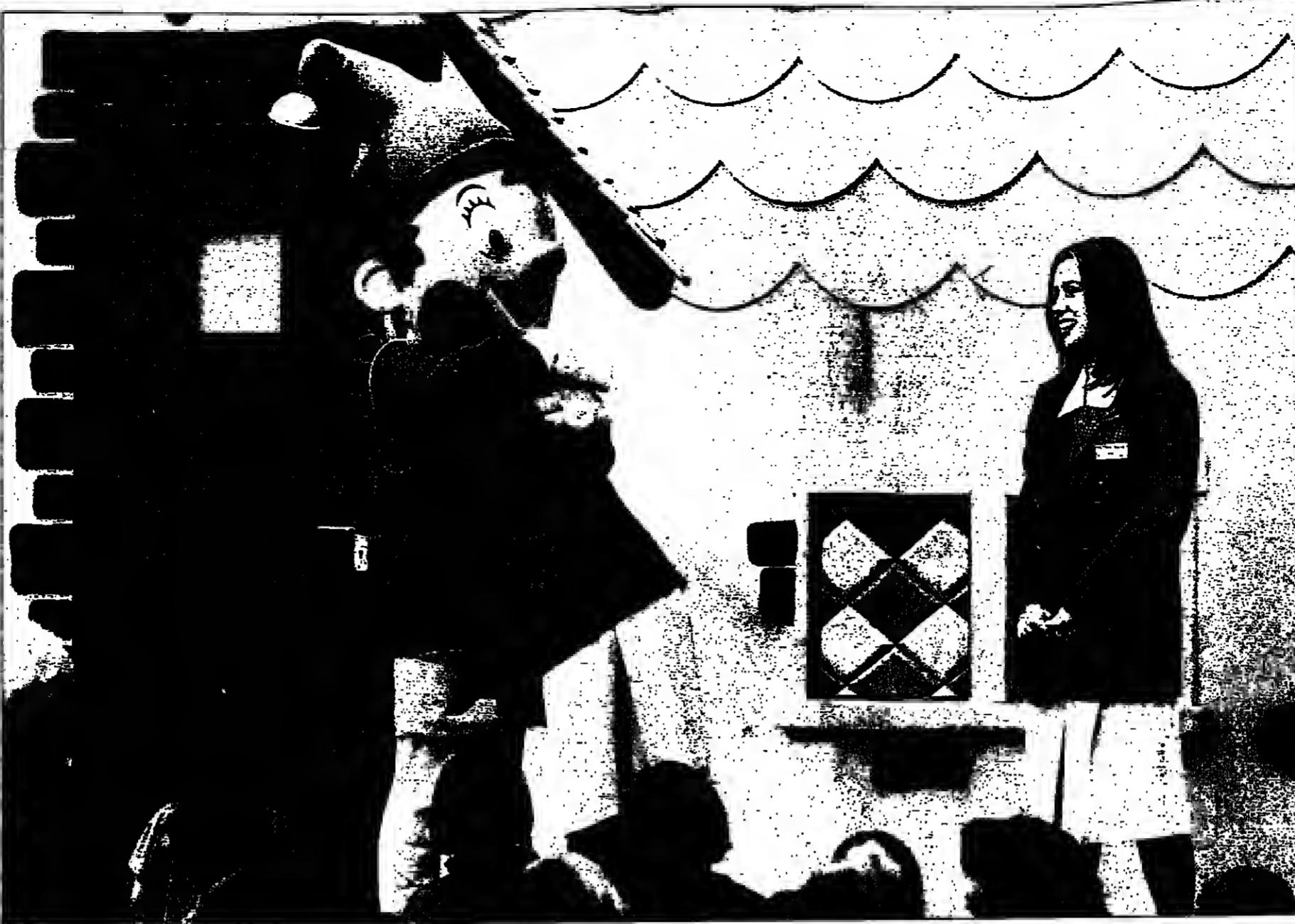
The UK industry recently hosted a conference to promote world-wide best practice and meet the millennium challenge.

RAY HALL
Chairman
British Nuclear Industry Forum
London SW1

Gay age of consent

Sir: Distasteful though it was for the Lords to interfere with the development of human rights for young gay men, it should be treated as an opportunity by the Government.

The clause relating to the



John Voos

In the last of our series on Butlin's Somerwest World at Minehead, children and staff meet Noddy
Like all photographs published in *The Independent*, this can be purchased by calling Readers' Photographs on 0171-293 2534 (subject to availability)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number, fax to 0171 293 2056 or e-mail to letters@independent.co.uk
E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity

lowering of the age of consent for homosexuals should now be dropped from the Crime and Disorder Bill to allow it to complete its passage during this session of Parliament, and a new piece of legislation introduced at the earliest opportunity to address the fundamental issues of equality and human rights in relation

to sexuality, by introducing a common age of consent for all citizens (presumably at the sensible age of 16) and legalising all private sexual activity between consenting citizens.

These two measures would, at a stroke, remove the most obnoxious discriminatory aspects of the current legal mish-mash and provide a consent-based basis for subsequent more detailed legislation dealing with public aspects of sexuality (pornography, prostitution etc) which could introduce long overdue reforms in how the state seeks to regulate the sexual activities of its citizens.

MICHAEL BRYANT
Carrforth, Lancashire

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LOIS LE LION
Portsmouth

Sir: Congratulations to Maureen Freely on her article "Joys of modern life: The electric nit-comb" (21 July).

My nine-year-old daughter has had head lice almost constantly for five years. Like Maureen, her fond parents baulked at bombarding her young scalp so regularly with organo-phosphate insecticides. The robocomb has transformed our existence. I too discovered a murderous glee when the lice were caught, tried and fried. You can therefore imagine my delight when I discovered the robocomb also works on kitten fleas!

ELIZABETH CARR
Cupar, Fife

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MONITOR

ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD

Transport proposals • Gay age of consent • Lambeth Conference • Paddy Ashdown • Papua New Guinea Tsunami • Bruce Nauman

GAY AGE OF CONSENT

Verdicts on the House of Lords' vote against reducing the age of consent for homosexuals

THE SUN

THE ARGUMENT about whether gay sex should be legal at 16 trundles on. I don't care one way or the other, but the anomalies of age rules in this country fascinate me. A uniformed policeman can confiscate your cigarettes if you're 16, but not your pipe or tobacco pouch. You can't go into a betting shop, have a tattoo or take part in a hypnotism act until you're 18. And - my favourite - you may soon be able to have gay sex at 16, but you won't be able to slice a salami unsupervised in a butcher's shop for two years. (Jane Moore)

THE GUARDIAN

FOR PROGRESSIVES, this is not as clear-cut a dilemma as it looks. All egalitarians are anxious that sexual rights be the same for everyone, straight or gay. Indeed, this newspaper was an early champion of a reduction in the gay age of consent for that reason: anything less is discrimination, plain and simple. The notion of that move toward equality being held up by a body which is itself such a symbol of inequality - the unelected House of Lords - only adds to the dismay at Wednesday's vote.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

ISN'T IT time to reform the composition of the House of Commons? It is strange but true that, in the matter of the age of homosexual consent, the House of Lords has shown a much greater understanding of common-sense feeling than its democratically elected sister. New Labour, whose mental horizons stop at the world of Soho House and Sir Terence Conran's smarter restaurants, may find it hard to comprehend, but most British people do not think it is self-evident that boys should be allowed to sleep with one another when they are 16.

THE EXPRESS

YOU WOULD expect the Prime Minister to declare that this kind of blatant affront to democracy was not to be tolerated. You would expect a

LAMBETH CONFERENCE

The religious press on the meeting in Canterbury of bishops of the Anglican Communion from across the world

CHURCH TIMES

THE ANGLICAN Church needs a centre which is mature enough to admit to the uncertainties that must exist in every human institution, but not to allow these to detract from the certain heart of the Christian faith. The task is a theological one: to preserve the balance of scripture, tradition and reason, but in a way that does not stifle the voice of the prophet. Authority would lie not in the willingness to say no, but in the willingness to say yes.

CATHOLIC HERALD

THE LAMBETH Conference is an important event in the life of the Anglican Communion, our brothers and sisters in Christ".

Catholic reaction to the debates and conclusions should be neither of uncritical approval of all that seems positive, nor of schadenfreude

EXHIBITION OF THE WEEK

Bruce Nauman retrospective at the Hayward Gallery

EVENING STANDARD

NAUMAN, SO easily imitated, himself polluted, now pollutes every art school in the land, pollutes the timorous art teacher and the numbed minds of critics and curators, and has done more than any other man to bring about the death of ancestral forms of art, for what he does is a gift to the incompetent and to the shallow mind. If the idiocies of the Britpack are triumphant, Bruce Nauman, master of bedlam, is to blame. (Brian Sewell)

TIME OUT

IT IS one of the ironies of history that, while most of the socially conscious work now seems ludicrously misguided

Prescott's on the right track



FINANCIAL TIMES

THE WHITE Paper has set out a clear objective: curbing the increase in motor traffic. Achieving it, however, lies only partly within the Government's sphere of influence. A big change in the habits of the British public will be required. There is scope for optimism in the experiences of some Continental cities. But, as yet, no advanced industrial society has made the wholesale leap to which the White Paper's rhetoric aspires.

NEW STATESMAN

TRANSPORT OUGHT to be precisely the area where a left-of-centre government makes a difference. Just as Margaret Thatcher instinctively favoured the individualistic merits of the car, so a Labour minister should favour the social merits of public transport. The climate could hardly be better: growing environmental concerns, particularly among the young; the public admiration of Swampy and his mates; a London Underground and rail system so unreliable that it must certainly have influenced the enormous pro-Labour swing in the capital's commuter belt last year. That New Labour seems afraid to ride even on as favourable a wind as this is cause for great despair.

TRANSPORT WHITE PAPER

Reactions to John Prescott's plans to reduce society's reliance on the private car

THE ECONOMIST

WHO IS going to tame the motor car? Not "two-Jag Prescott", as the deputy prime minister was described by various tabloid newspapers after he unveiled his transport white paper on July 20. Although the document was widely hailed as the most fundamental shift in transport policy for a generation, it will have only a marginal impact on growth in traffic. The deputy prime minister's determination to roll back the tide of traffic is not in doubt. But until it attracts much greater political support from his colleagues, even his best attempts will be doomed to failure.

DAILY MAIL

I AGREE utterly with John Prescott. I'm 100 per cent behind his campaign to reduce traffic on our roads. I think the nation ought to walk to the shops, use the bus, cycle to work and leave the car in the garage. I just don't want to do it myself. (Lyndis Lee Pether)

EVENING STANDARD

THE BLUNT and inescapable fact is that pressuring motorists to use their cars less will be politically unpopular. Is John Prescott prepared to suffer the odium, and will the Prime Minister back him? We won't know for years. In this White Paper, the steel flashes but the blade is soft. The most likely outcome is that nothing much will change before Mr Prescott qualifies for his bus pass.

THE EXPRESS

BUSINESS PARKING spaces should have been hit with an enormous charge and supermarkets should pay for their car park spaces, with the Bill passed on to those who drive to shop in them. White Paper? More like carte blanche to the motorist.

THE SUN

MUCH OF Prescott's transport plan is well intentioned. Clearly, something has to be done to ease our clogged-up roads. But there is no way the Government will turn Britain into a bike-mad nation like China. Not even with bigger bike sheds. Sorry to put a spoke in the wheel.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA TSUNAMI

Reactions to the terrible devastation caused by the massive tsunami, which followed an underwater earthquake

PAPUA NEW GUINEA POST-COURIER

THE SANDY beaches of Aitape and their high waves have been hit by Papua New Guinea's "surfer's paradise" attracting international interest. The sea and the beautiful Sissano Lagoon, separated by a 100-metre sand strip where their villages were situated, were the source of livelihood for the people who lived near Aitape town.

That alluring image changed last Friday night. The local people's best natural asset and mother of blessings became their worst enemy, turning their paradise into watery hell. We can't know what the future holds, or how the locals are going to cope.

A pressing decision remains what to do with them. It's a huge problem - are they going to settle inland, or will they rebuild. The only thing that can be said with certainty is that they still love the sea.

CANBERRA TIMES Australia

THE RESPONSE of the Australian people and government have made to the disaster in Papua New Guinea and the stark contrast between the condition of people in the disaster zone and the relative comfort in Australia should put paid to the insular, selfish views of people who begrudge helping people outside Australia. It is an easy, populist thing to appeal to people to slam helping others beyond our shores. Those who have done so should now feel ashamed.

THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE United States

IN THIS remote corner of the world, some survivors say, the good and evil spirits still struggle with the gospel of the missionaries for the hearts and souls of their tribal people. For generations, they will tell the story of the day when the great wave came, as high as the coconut trees, to give them a warning that their gods must be pacified.

MISCELLANEOUS

Stories from around the world

DENVER POST United States

A DISPUTE BETWEEN rock climbers and the US Forest Service underscores broader concerns about public lands management. The flap involves rock climbers' safety anchors. Most of the devices leave no trace. But in wilderness areas, the forest service wants to outlaw bolts drilled into rock - an important element that climbers sometimes must use on smooth stone or to anchor descent ropes. Because the bolts are permanent, the forest service says, they violate the ban on permanent human development in wilderness areas. Whatever damage the bolts do is less obnoxious than the harm caused by other wilderness users who may litter, short-cut trail switchbacks and camp too close to streams and lakes.



LEBANON DAILY STAR

AS A SEX, women appear to have a lesser developed sense of passing the buck than their male counterparts. It certainly will not be easy for them to break in at the highest levels of politics and, given the fact that women have been so neglected and ignored for so long, in truth

there are probably few of them in existence who could any way be immediately drafted into Lebanon's cabinet as its first female minister with any hope of success.

GULF TIMES Qatar

DUBAI WILL build a five-star prison for its "guests" that will include private televisions, central air-conditioning and computer labs. "The new premises will have double rooms for two to four guests. The rooms will have television sets and central air-conditioners," the head of Dubai Prison, Brigadier Abbas Ali, said. A prison shop will be opened to sell "high quality furniture" made by the inmates to the United Arab Emirates' schools and residents.

Sp of

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

"I'm against drink-driving and I agree with the court that I should be punished. I find it lamentable." Gérard Depardieu, actor, on being convicted of drink driving in Versailles

"We take a rather wicked pleasure in being unfashionable." Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, speaking on behalf of herself and her husband Leo

"She would rather face a firing squad than a photocall." Martin Bell MP about his new wife Fiona

"Within a measurably short period of time we could be staring down the barrel of Scottish independence." William Hague, Tory leader

"I often feel the urge to slap my guests." Vanessa Feltz, TV presenter

"I've got so much money - more than I'll ever need - that it doesn't matter how much tax I pay." Phil Collins, rock star

JOURNAL DE L'ART

All is revealed as modesty turns to mirth

SITTING IN a tapas bar in mixed company the other evening, minding my own business, I suddenly came to one of those understandings of life which the religious call a revelation. What was revealed to me was nothing less than the anguish of being a man; and what followed from it, though not a conversion exactly, was a profound conviction that no woman is worth the love we give them.

We had reached that tetchy stage of dinner in a tapas bar when you realise you have had nothing but half a cocktail, sardine and a chickpea to eat, and dark suspicions are beginning to gather as to who bogged the squid. It is always about now that the floor show starts. Don't misunderstand me - I yield to no one in my enthusiasm for flamenco. But all that yelling and

stomping on an empty stomach! And then there is the fear (if you are a man) that the flamenco dancer is going to brush up against you with her skirt, fall - laughing hoarsely - into your lap and place the Carmen flower of gypsy allure behind your ear, or click those ivory Andalusian clackers of hers suggestively in your face.

There is cultural confusion here, I grant you: flamenco is not cabaret, and malagueña is no Las Vegas torch song. But that is part of the anguish of being a man - you know the rules but you can never be dead certain that they do.

While we men exchanged apprehensive glances with one another (will it be you or will it be me?), the women at our table yelled and stomped along with the musicians. No empty stomach problems

there, notice. (If you are a woman, you wolf the octopus first and stick your finger down your throat later.) But no shame either - that is my point. No embarrassment. No modesty. None of that excruciating anticipation of humiliation to which the delicate tissue of male self-consciousness is forever subject.

Hard to believe that bashfulness and *pudor* were once held to be attributes of women. Show me a bashful woman today. When did you last open a newspaper and not read about some sad sack of a Sunday school teacher reduced by the concupiscence of women to taking his pants off in the local church hall every Friday night to earn the necessary extra shilling? Ask yourself why he needs that extra shilling. So that he can pay for the mother of his children to go out on a Friday night



HOWARD JACOBSON
By the time we were 13 we were on first-name terms with every stripper in the country

and watch some other sad sack of a Sunday school teacher take off his pants off to fund his children's

mother's weekly snatch at the posh-pouch, that's why.

Sounds innocuous, doesn't it, the full *Monty*? Sounds almost dourous. Just off to cop a full *Monty*, my sweet. Sounds no more unbecoming than an evening of bingo or a George Formby sing-along. You can even tell the kids: "Mummy won't be able to read you *Thomas the Tank Engine* tonight, my little sugar plum. She's running an itsy bit late for the full *Monty*."

"That's all right, Mummy, have a lovely night. And how *Monty* a kiss from *Teddy*."

But who is to tell them the real reason they are going to bed storyless and cuddleless for yet another Friday night - that Mummy is out screaming herself hoarse in the hope of getting a total stranger to poke his dick in her eye?

Yes, yes, I know that men have been frequenting lap-dancing establishments for as long as they have had laps to dance on. When I was 12, I spent an entire year's pocket money on strip joints. My friends the same. By the time we were 13 we were on first-name terms with every stripper in the country. Some of us collected their autographs. Or their tassels.

I myself had the best collection of sequined nipple-pasties in north Manchester. But that was different. We behaved ourselves. We did not grab. We did not resort to lewdness. We sat, red-faced and silent, in the darkness, our mouths full of burning rocks, our shirts stuck with all the flaming secretions of shame to our chests, appalled by our own neediness, disgusted by our natures.

Take a look at any man coming out into the light from a house of sexual extortion. He is always blanched, furtive, guilty. A creature who would make himself invisible if he could, for he knows he is not worthy to be looked upon, least of all by himself. Nothing is more plain to him than that having traded in his virtue, he has forgone his immortal soul. And how do women disport themselves when they leave the scene of their disgrace? With mirth. Always with mirth - unable quite to decide which was the more risible, their own temerity or the sight of the genitals of a man.

Women! They steal your tapas, they uncover your nakedness, and they laugh. Only apes and sparrows have so little sense of sin.

Spurned matriarch of a media empire

SATURDAY PROFILE

ANNA MURDOCH

THAT BRIEF, cooling rush of air through the otherwise boiling canyons of midtown Manhattan early last Wednesday was travelling towards the skyscraper on Sixth Avenue that is the New York base of Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. This meteorological oddity, a low pressure zone inside a building, had been caused by a sudden and violent gash, a collective intake of breath, Anna, Rupert's wife, had done it. She had filed papers in Los Angeles for a divorce from her husband of 31 years.

Sensation is what the folks at News Corp like best; that preferably mixed with sex and mystery: is what they purvey to the rest of us via television, the silver screen and on the pages of books and newspapers. But this tale, which features none other than the boss and his wife, has confounded them, including those who had thought they were intimate with the couple.

The first shock came last April, when a terser line in the Liz Smith gossip column of Murdoch's own *New York Post* revealed that the pair were separating. It was a stunner because even close friends had thought that the Murdoch marriage was one of rock. But they stayed calm. Anna, they surmised, was firing a shot across her husband's bow. She had failed to persuade him to slow down and devote more of his energies to her; and this was her grand gambit to get his attention at last.

But last week's bulletin from Los Angeles shatters such optimism. In her divorce petition Anna, 53, cited "irreconcilable differences" with the 67-year-old tycoon. There was nothing to suggest that Anna did not mean business. Under California law, she stands to win a half share of the couple's 31 per cent stake in the News Corp media empire, alone worth \$4.5bn. She is, and still remains, a member of News Corp's board of directors. Half the proceeds from all his other assets could be hers too - the

lavish homes in New York, London and Beverly Hills, the mountain retreat in Aspen, as well as cars, a jet and a yacht.

Why, you might ask, the surprise? Doesn't this seem par for the course for our cynical age? Wives spurned in middle age by high-powered husbands who have become bored with them are two a penny, aren't they? For Anna, the script might almost have been written the moment she married Rupert, when she was 23 and he 37. Surely she could see this was no stay-at-home man who would happily trade work shoes for slippers at 65. He was 14 years older than she was and, worse, he already had a track record of break-up. To marry Anna, he had to engineer a divorce from his first wife, Pat Booker.

But no one has ever suggested that Anna does not have her head screwed on. Born in Scotland to a Scottish mother who had a dry-cleaning business and to an immigrant engineer from Estonia called Jakub Tov, she is considered by friends to be bright, if not brilliant, and even-keeled in all circumstances. In 1954, the family left Scotland for Australia and a doomed venture setting up a picnic park. When her mother walked out of the family, Anna was left to help raise her younger siblings. Blond and beautiful, with high Slavic cheekbones, she finally embarked on a career on journalism. As a cub reporter on the *Sydney Morning Herald*, she decided to seek an interview with the paper's owner, Rupert Murdoch.

There began what had seemed an exemplary and unassimilable partnership. Anna, who has often described herself as bossy, was determined from the start to keep Rupert anchored to a traditional home life, whatever the pressures

of his business life. She would even wake their children, Elizabeth, Lachlan and James, at 6am on Mondays, so they could have breakfast with Daddy before he vanished until the following weekend.

Nor did Anna ever allow herself to become completely uninvolved in the building of her husband's empire. Often, especially once all the children were at private schools in New York, she would fly with him on his trips. And in 1990, she took her spot on the News Corp board.

"They understood each other; they spoke the same language," one London-based News Corp executive and family friend said last week. "and they always seemed loving. Even recently you would see them touching and holding hands. It always looked like me as if there was still real love there - as if they were still having sex, in fact." And never, not even now, has there been even the faintest whiff of infidelity on either of them.

And Anna grew in the marriage. With children at school, she returned to writing, penning two respectable novels, published by Murdoch's own HarperCollins. Friends say she grew in other ways, too, as she has navigated middle age she has become increasingly conservative in her views, especially in her opposition to abortion. This, in turn, was fuelled by her deepening commitment to Catholicism. She developed her role as a philanthropist, becoming an important benefactor of the Catholic Church in the United States. It was her generosity that impelled the Vatican a few months ago to confer a Papal Knighthood on her husband. What she never did succeed in doing was converting Rupert to her religion. In so far as he is anything, Rupert is Scottish Presbyterian.

Now, of course, it is hindsight time. Nobody but the parties themselves can ever say what really destroys a marriage. Sometimes even they cannot. But that will never stop others from speculating.

Writing in a recent issue of *Punch*, a former butler to the Murdochs in their St James's Place flat in London, details the dismal battle Anna fought daily to detach her husband, if only for the occasional holiday, from his business whirl. Apparently, she rarely succeeded. Holidays she arranged in spots as varied as Venice and the Lake District invariably came to grief with Rupert straining to return to work. Never could she warm Rupert to the cultural distractions she enjoyed.

The butler, Philip Townsend, relates Mr Murdoch's irritation at being dragged off to watch the opera *Carmen*.

"As they drew away in their car," he writes, "Mr M told me cheerily: 'Philip, we're off to see *Camelot*.' Clearly annoyed by the mistake, Anna snapped: 'It's not *Camelot* Philip, it's *Carmen*.' So what?" he retorted. "It's all the same to me."

Even when at home, he spent most of his time either on the telephone or watching the television. Jetting about and making impossible deals is still simply what he likes doing best. But was it more than that? Did he, in fact, tire of Anna and her self-professed tendency to nag? Her concern for Rupert's welfare extended to berating what he ate while at work to stave off heart disease - lots of carrots, white meat and white wine.

One old Australian friend says she saw all the signs of an aging wife frantically fighting to retain her husband's interest in her, including in the sex department. So dramatic was the success of one recent dieting regime that some speculated that the pounds shed by Anna, as well as her sudden rediscovery of more youthful female contours, had been achieved by more than just eating less. In other words, that she had

undergone the full reconstruction deal, liposuction and plastic surgery included. "Anna was in a dilemma. If she wanted to, she could still look like a sexpot. But deep down, she preferred a more mummy, matronly look. Because that is the role that she wanted the most - the matriarch of a solid family."

It may, indeed, be true that when she asked Rupert for a separation in April, Anna was calling his bluff. And it may be also be the case that

only then did she realise that she had miscalculated. "She possibly thought that she was the only person in the world who could issue Rupert with an ultimatum," commented one New Corp executive in New York. He went on: "But Rupert doesn't go back, he never does".

One theory goes that the request for the separation gave Rupert a sense of liberation. He has not looked better than he does now for years. And the wedding ring has been off his finger since April. About one thing, however, you will be pressed to find any convincing theories. How do you square Anna's deepening Catholicism and her attachment to traditional values with her filing for divorce this week? "You cannot," the London-based executive said. "I would have paid money on her refusing to give him a divorce." And so would almost anyone who knows her. Or thinks they know her.

DAVID USBORNE

Bring home a truly British film revolution

SATURDAY ESSAY by MALCOLM BRADBURY

IN THE United States at the moment, it feels like a halcyon season. The Clinton good times, apart from a dangerous dip or two in the Dow-Jones index, just continue to roll. As the millennium slips towards its end, Nineties America feels itself to be more modern, powerful and confident than it has for some long time. The Cold War has surely gone away. So has Vietnam and the long legacy of bitterness.

These are halcyon days for British visitors and travelling cultural commentators too. There was a time when British travellers risked the Atlantic to ponder the perils of democracy, the extremes of capitalism and corporatism, the modern doom of the skyscraper city, the dangers of a society of litigious individualists unhappy to accept federal control.

Today, when Blairite Britain dispatches its emissaries, the news is better. Jonathan Freedland's recent book, *Bring Home the Revolution: How Britain Can Live the American Dream*, owes its topicality to our own present sense of cultural vacuum - that feeling that we are sloughing off some old, tired Britain - class-divided, morally rigid, monarchical, over-entitled, and reaching for some new, republican social identity that even ageing

Marxists no longer seek to the East. Freedland's book makes joyful traffic of an old, well-trodden journey. When Charles Dickens crossed the paradoxical Atlantic in the 1840s, even the youthful radical bridled at the bland social levelling, the Edenic utopianising, the cults of the self and the Almighty Dollar.

Freedland finds something more familiar, more ancient; the libertarian paradise, America now is just what many dreaming 19th-century European radicals and immigrants thought it was (or should be):

The Beacon of Freedom, the land of equality, the citadel of the Rights of Person.

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embarrassment, the word "elite" has become something of a dirty term.

Which means that these are interesting days for the British film industry, now on a roll. For a long period, after the great decline that took it down to a cottage industry, it has survived largely through the support of the television broadcasting companies, above all Channel 4. The money we keep spending on the great gamble of the National Lottery has made the recent difference; lottery funding has already put more than £45m into 54 films.

Now, armed with new, substantial funding from the Treasury Spending Review, announced yesterday, Chris Smith is in the process of restructuring the organisation of the entire support side of the industry, releasing new cash, sponsorship and film franchising in association with the growing sector of media independents.

It comes at a time of new confidence: a row of successes like *Bean*, *The Full Monty*, *Sliding Doors* (many, as it turns out, dependent on American finance, or returning profits to American investors), a massive rise in the number of

films in production (128 were released in 1996), a hungry chase for new and original scripts and writers.

The experience of making good television drama has provided an excellent training-ground. Nobody can deny the strength of the home talent in production, writing and acting. What none of these things - the new money, the clear supply of original talent - have done so far is to stabilise a secure national film industry, to provide commercial foundations for certain continuous production, and win British films wide release and safe access to screens and audiences.

There is another hope invested in the idea of a strong British film industry, the dream we are all anxious waiting to see. Whenever Hollywood seems less than adventurous or interesting, as it is just now, there has always been a traditional recourse to the international film industry: lower budget, more independent, less pre-formatted, more writer and director-led.

Unfortunately, the experience of film-making beyond Hollywood has not been happy. *The French* invested hugely in their own film industry, and demanded public loyalty for the Francophone product; it has not paid off. The British

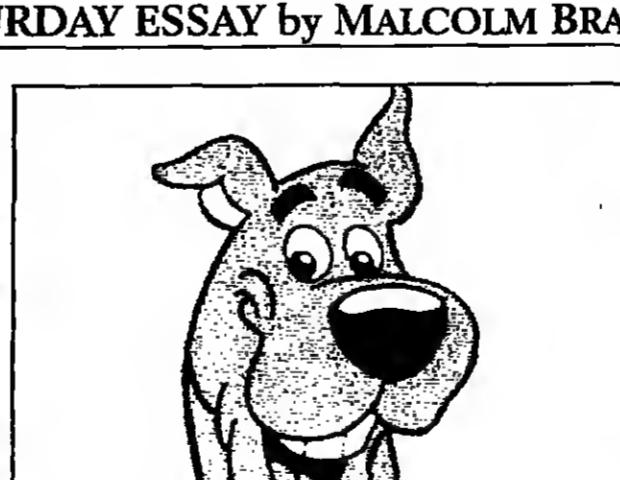
industry has largely survived by being Janus-faced. When it cannot make films in Britain, it functions as best talent over to L.A. If

British films are not in production, it can mount major Hollywood productions in this country, or it could until cheaper, more tax-friendly locations began to multiply.

It would be good to think an enlarged British film industry meant a sudden profusion of good films, films with unusual stories; a social and political edge; themes that touched on a more than sentimental or child-centred view of history; adult and intelligent films. It is what the great British directors, from Ken Loach to John Schlesinger, used to make.

But these are indeed halcyon days. American popular culture is benignly in the ascendant. Whatever product Hollywood opts for, it is safe. It has not just produced but distribution advantage. It can budget high and think easy because world distribution is always there.

I have had as much delight from American pop culture as anyone: I would not be without it for the world. But I hope that when, filmically, we bring back the revolution, it will not be to make our own brand of *Scooby-Doo*.



tainment and style-hungry society that is carrying us into the age to come.

In Britain too, the energies, the materials, the dream-stuff of popular culture have become a prime commodity. Ours is the film, media and music generation; here we will find the core material of our own new Cool Britannia.

Even in the national bastions of Culture and Heritage, the classic is something of an

Mark Hampton

MARK HAMPTON was blessed with an intelligence that could have supported any career – university professor, high-court judge, learned critic – and he did exactly what he wanted with it: he became a decorator.

He explained his career choice in the introduction to the first of his two books, *Mark Hampton on Decorating* (1989), a lucid, practical, personal work illustrated with his own wa-

'Interior decoration is seen by many as a frivolous career. Yet to transform the bleak and barren into welcoming places seems to me important and worthwhile'

tercolors and India ink washes: We all know that interior decoration is seen by many as a frivolous career and preposterous fashion statements. Yet to transform the bleak and the barren into welcoming places where one can live seems to me an important and worthwhile goal in life. So does this transformation can stun the eye, sometimes simply gladden it, but these are not frivolous pursuits.

His second book, like the first, he illustrated and wrote without a ghost's assistance: this prose was so good there were doubters, was *Legendary Decorators of the Twentieth Century* (1992), edited by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, who was also a friend and, informally, a client. Other private clients included Anne Bass, a member of the Texas oil family; Lord Palumbo of

Walbrook; the philanthropist Brooke Astor; and the bibliophile Carter Burden, whose grand Fifth Avenue library Hampton considered his masterpiece.

Important period buildings were a special interest. Hampton, He was involved in the restoration and decoration of interiors at Blair House, the President's official guest residence in Washington DC, the Oval Office and private reception rooms at the White House for Presidents and Mrs George Bush; the White House Blue Room for the Clintons; the Governor's Mansion in Albany, New York; Gracie Mansion, home of New York City's mayors; the American Academy in Rome; and the private quarters of Ambassador Pamela Harriman at the United States Embassy in Paris – among others.

A native of the Mid-west, Mark Hampton became a quintessential New Yorker. He dined at the best tables of the best restaurants and danced at the most glittering parties. The guests at a typical dinner given by Mark and Duane Hampton, his wife of 34 years, at their Park Avenue apartment or Southampton house might have included a museum director, an art-collecting mogul, the Chief Correspondent of the New York Times, and Princess Margaret.

But Hampton's favourite party was the annual Christmas reception in his apartment for office staff and suppliers – the manager of an upholstery workshop, a master carpenter, a dealer in antique carpets – an event that featured a pianist leading the singing of popular standards and carols. The couple's two grown-up daughters, Kate, an actress, and Alexa, who works in her father's firm, never missed this impressed.

Hampton began his career in the early Sixties as David Hicks's New York associate. His next job was with Parish Hadley, his third with McMillen Inc, also in New York. In 1976 he established his own firm, Mark Hampton Inc, and in 1989 The Mark Hampton Collection for Hickory Chair Company was launched. The line which he added to each year, consists of tables, chairs, cabinets, and upholstered pieces rein-

terpreting his favourite designs of the late 18th and 19th centuries.

After an early phase in Hicks's Sixties mode – monochromatic palette, small geometric-patterned carpets, perspex tables – Hampton developed his own sophisticated yet unpretentious version of traditional Anglo-American style with its antique furniture and Oriental rugs, floral chintzes, sponged walls, skirted tables, and collections of botanical or architectural prints. During the English country-house mania of America's boomer Eighties, Mark Hampton Inc became one of the United States's leading interior design firms. Hampton was considered a genius at furniture placement, and his art-historical approach was tempered by an emphasis on comfort.

He approvingly quoted Geoffrey Bunnison's "Why not be cosy?" As he wrote elegiacally about lamplight:

It seems to me that the act of leaving a lamp lighted on the hall table for those who have not yet returned for the night, is rather like the ancients leaving lamps on the altars of their favorite deities. It is a warm, loving gesture and a welcoming sight to the one who is returning. Somehow, leaving a recessed ceiling light on doesn't quite evoke the same cosy feeling.

Despite his celebrated wit and intimate knowledge of the lives of the rich and famous, Hampton never indulged in gossip and name-dropping. Louis O. Gropp, the editor-in-chief of *House Beautiful*, a magazine in which Hampton's life-enhancing rooms and essays appeared over

three decades, described the designer as "a warm human being who never forgot his strong Midwestern Quaker roots".

During the last months of Mark Hampton's illness, frequent rumours of his imminent death would spread, but he would endure his round of chemotherapy and soon reappear at the office and at the dinner tables of friends, thinner and paler but mentally as fiercely alive as ever before. Thus his death came as a surprise.

Elaine Greene

Mark Hampton, interior designer, author, and watercolourist; born Indianapolis, Indiana, 1 June 1940; president Mark Hampton Inc 1989-98; married 1961 Duane Fiegel (two daughters); died New York 23 July 1998.

All 207 mosques (11 of them in Banja Luka) and 60 other religious buildings in the area were burnt to the ground or blown up by the Bosnian Serbs, many during a frenzy of destruction in 1993. The 16th-century Unesco-listed Ferhadija mosque where Halilovic served had been located just next to the community centre housing his office.

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Despite this orgy of killing and destruction of his community in what he termed a "terrible genocide", Halilovic remained a courteous and gentle man. He was a vocal advocate of forgiveness, peace and reconciliation. He praised a secret network of Serbs who helped save non-Serbs. "There were Serbs who secretly helped the Muslims in attempting to ease the suffering caused by Serb extremists. We are very grateful for that."

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Felix Cortley

Haji Ibrahim Efendi Halilovic, mufti; born Brnjik, Yugoslavia 24 June 1943; Mufti of Banja Luka 1989-98; died Banja Luka, Bosnia 20 July 1998.



Drawing of Hampton at work by Henry Koehler

Hermann Prey

THE CAREER of Hermann Prey, one of post-war Germany's finest lyric baritones, always stood in the shadow of a singer only four years older who had already appropriated the very repertoire Prey was intending to make his own: Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. For some years the German press even tried to play off the two against each other in an attempt to duplicate the famous Callas-Tebaldi feud.

Prey's career and achievements, however, can very well stand on their own: at his vocal peak, no less a conductor than Claudio Abbado chose him as his Figaro in *The Barber of Seville*, and his 1986 Bayreuth Beckmesser was widely acknowledged as a milestone in the interpretation of the role. In later years Prey increasingly chose recitals over the operatic stage, becoming one of the few singers genuinely at home in both repertoires.

If he succeeded both as an opera singer and recitalist, there were more persistent doubts about some of his other endeavours. He zealously embraced television and was not above donning a Tyrolean hat and costume jacket, appearing in a multiplicity of populist celebrity shows, some of which he presented himself, crooning sentimental pseudo-folk songs while insisting that he was trying to bring classical music to "the masses". For this he received exaggerated adoration and condemnation

in equal measure, though his work in opera and recitals showed little evidence of being "spoiled" by his frequent forays into popular music.

His public image hid a personality constantly plagued by depression, which prevented him from working for part of his career. Later Prey managed to integrate some of these darker emotions in his *Lieder* recitals, such as his *Winterreise* cycle, still preferred by some to Fischer-Dieskau's more celebrated and perhaps more mannered versions.

Hermann Prey was born in Berlin in 1929, the son of a butcher, and he began singing as a boy. He studied with two local teachers, Harry Gottschall and Jaro Prohaska. Following the then usual path of a brief apprenticeship in provincial theatres, his star rose after his 1955 debut in Vienna as Figaro, a role that was to remain one of his finest. He rapidly made an international name for himself singing regularly in New York, London, Bayreuth, and Milan, among other cities, his appearances including a series of brilliant performances as Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* in Salzburg during the early Sixties. His home turf, however, was Munich, where he enjoyed some of his greatest triumphs, especially during his now legendary partnership with the tenor Fritz Wunderlich. Wunderlich died tragically early in 1966, leaving Prey feeling, as he said, "like a brother abandoned".

Dissatisfied with a repertoire con-

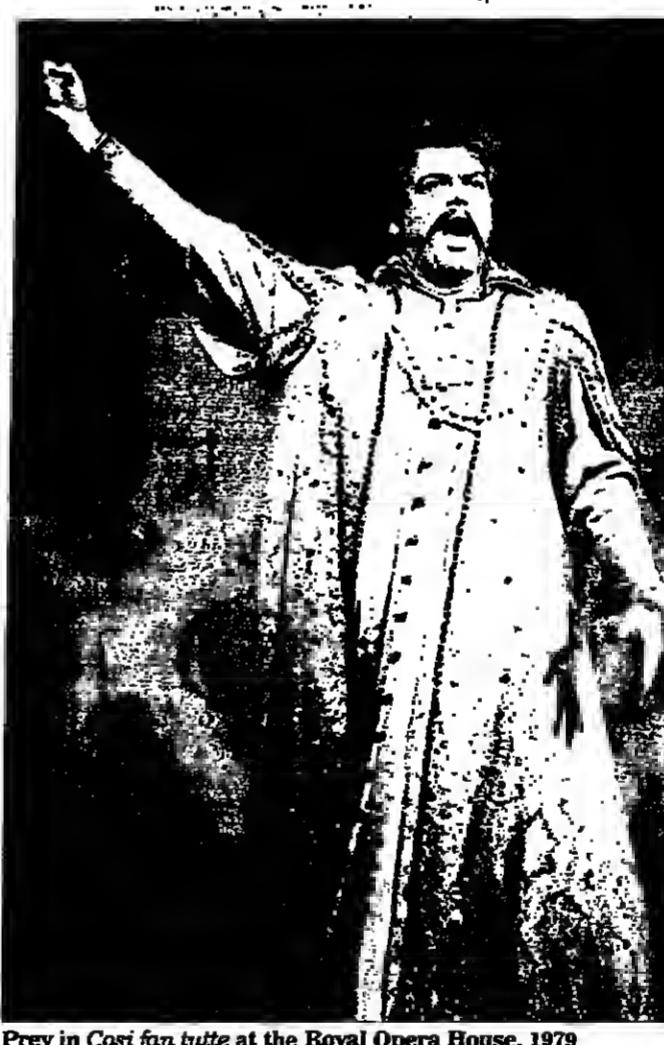
fined to Mozart, Rossini and the lighter Verdi and Wagner roles, Prey increased his concentration on recitals, and added an ambitious recording project intended to give an overview of German songs from the Middle Ages to the 20th century. As a *Lieder* singer, he succeeded in avoiding the schmaltz and overemphasis which had once made him a popular favourite with audiences in Germany and which at times marred his interpretation of opera.

In his *Lieder*, he displayed instead restraint, insight and a vocal prowess exceeding that of his long-time rival. His recorded legacy includes everything from the unspeakable to the sublime, testimony to a working life as eclectic and occasionally brilliant as any musician's throughout this century.

Prey, who died of a heart attack, had no plans to end his career. His diary was filled with engagements well into 2002. In London, he had appeared for the last time as an opera singer as Beckmesser in 1990, though his recital work at the Wigmore Hall kept him a regular visitor to Britain.

Philipp Blom

Hermann Prey, baritone; born Berlin 11 July 1929; married 1954 Barbara Pniok (one son, two daughters); died Kneiling vor München, Germany 23 July 1998.



Prey in *Così fan tutte* at the Royal Opera House, 1979

Professor Alan Stuart



ALAN STUART's brilliant academic career began when he joined the London School of Economics in 1946 as an undergraduate (Sir Claus Moser, just out of the RAF, was his tutor). He became Professor of Statistics in 1968 and Pro-Director of the LSE in 1976-79.

Stuart came from a modest home and was brought up by his widowed mother. He went to the Central Foundation School on the edge of the City of London and thence into the wartime army, where he had a grave accident requiring extensive hospital stays. He was taken on as a research assistant at the LSE in 1949. Sir Maurice Kendall, the newly appointed Professor of Statistics, had let it be known that he would engage the two best graduates of the year, Stuart was one of these.

An early Kendall/Stuart article, "The Law of Cyclic Proportion in British Elections", published in 1950 in the *British Journal of Sociology*, raised great interest. The authors appeared on election-night radio and television programmes in 1955 (an unknown young fellow just new to the BBC, Robin Day, was an assistant producer) and 1959.

Path-breaking work, particularly with Professor James Durbin and with Moser, on random sampling, illustrated the wide spectrum of Stuart's contribution to statistics, and led to consultancies inter alia with Gallup and the British Market Research Bureau. He was also an adviser to British Petroleum and consultant to the third Lord Rothschild.

Stuart was invited to join

Kendall as editor of the reference work *Advanced Theory of Statistics*, first published in 1943 and now in its sixth edition. In time Stuart became solely responsible and augmented it extensively into a three-volume tome. This involved enormous effort and in some respects a lifetime abattoir did follow, but the book is a lasting contribution to statistics, a *Gray's Anatomy* of its field.

Stuart was an excellent teacher and cared for and helped undergraduate and graduate students. He had a phenomenal intellect, memory, perspicacity and industry. Surprisingly, no official honours came his way.

He married Flora Mabb, an LSE

librarian, in 1949. She contracted polio in the last major outbreak in 1957 and, after long hospital sojourns, remained gravely physically handicapped, wheelchair-bound. Alan and their two daughters lovingly and effectively cared for her within a full family life. They enjoyed sabbaticals in Nice, 1963/64, and Stanford, California, 1972/73, before her death in 1978. In 1977 Julia Garant, also an LSE librarian, became his second wife.

Stuart had eclectic interests. In his younger days he was a qualified soccer referee and wrote on football for the *Observer* before they published his articles on election statistics. He became an accomplished cook, baker and gardener and had an impressive understanding of wines. Widely read, an expert on Dickens, he took to the piano in mid-life. He had sound judgement

and a fine turn of speech – after a difficult Appointments Committee meeting, he remarked, "A shorter man might weigh more than a taller man."

Alan Stuart was a highly principled, versatile and warm-hearted man whose work will long continue to contribute to statistical theory and knowledge.

Martin Simons

Alan Stuart, statistician; born London 20 September 1922; research assistant, London School of Economics 1949-58; Reader in Statistics 1958-65; Professor of Statistics 1966-82 (Emeritus); Fellow 1982-98; married 1949 Flora Mabb (died 1973; two daughters), 1977 Julia Garant (one daughter, one son); died 25 June 1998.

Mufti Ibrahim Halilovic

IBRAHIM HALILOVIC, who had charge of the Muslim community in the Bosnian Serb stronghold of Banja Luka, witnessed the murder or expulsion of almost his entire community and the annihilation of almost all physical trace of the once-flourishing Muslim life in northwest Bosnia. Repeatedly harassed, arrested and, on at least three occasions threatened with death by the Bosnian Serb authorities, Halilovic survived through all the odds to die of a sudden heart attack.

The Banja Luka authorities refused to allow his burial at the site of his former mosque and his body had to be taken to Sarajevo for burial. The Republika Srpska Ministry of Religion sent its condolences to the Islamic community of Banja Luka on his death, despite Bosnian Serb efforts over the years to destroy that community.

Halilovic was born in a village near Tuzla into an old Bosnian family. He graduated from the Gazi Husrev-beg Islamic school in Sarajevo in June 1967 and was appointed imam of two mosques in Banja Luka.

He became senior imam of the Ferhadija mosque in Banja Luka in February 1968. In 1968 he gained a degree in Arabic language and literature at Belgrade University. He became mufti of the Bosanska Krajina (the region that includes Banja Luka) in 1988, with supervision over the more than 200 imams in the region.

When the war in Bosnia broke out in 1992, Halilovic and his wife Eminca decided to remain in Banja Luka, despite the dangers. During the bitter fighting, six local imams were murdered, while nearly 200 were expelled by Bosnian Serb forces. More than 200,000 Bosnian Muslims, over 90 per cent of the Muslim population, were driven from their homes.

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Felix Cortley



For friends of novelist Iris Murdoch, the fact that she has Alzheimer's does not mean an end to the conversation and laughter. She might even sing for you. By Paul Levy

Sunday lunch with Iris

Iris Murdoch and John Bayley had Sunday lunch with us this week, as they often do. We had other guests, some of whom had not before met John and Iris, and we of course prepared them for the encounter by telling them that Iris has Alzheimer's disease. It isn't anything like so difficult as you might imagine.

As John says in his memoir, Iris "deals instinctively with more complex social situations, seeming to follow the conversation, prepared to bridge a silence by asking a question. It's usually 'Where do you come from?' or 'What are you doing now?' - questions that get repeated many times in the course of a social event. Other people, visitors or friends, adjust themselves well to these as soon as they grasp what is happening."

Iris seems to recognise our Oxfordshire farmhouse. In any case, she appears to be comfortable and can find her way to the loo and back to the table in the kitchen where we eat. She gives the impression that she recognises me and my wife, and embraces us and 17-year-old Tatiana, who is her god-daughter. It is an informal arrangement, as neither we nor Iris have much to do with religion; but Iris's regular and imaginative Christmas presents were the most eagerly anticipated of all, as they came in layers which, when unwrapped, revealed pretty stones and bits of jewellery!

Because of her present state, it is somehow flattering to be recognised by Iris. I was thrilled a few weeks ago when we met for a publishing party, and Iris showed pleasure at seeing me walk into the room.

The first indication I had that something was wrong came in 1995, when John and Iris and I drove together to Cheltenham for the literary festival. Iris had just published her novel *Jackson's Dilemma*, and the two of them were being interviewed on a large stage by Humphrey Carpenter with an audience of a few hundred people. I noticed that John cleverly diverted any questions addressed to Iris, leaving her to say only, "Well, yes" or "I'm not sure whether..." and then answering the query himself. I don't think anybody was aware of this. Later that evening, I asked Iris whether she had already begun work on her next novel.

"I don't think there will be another," she replied with what seemed total equanimity. How will you use all your time? I asked. "I'll read," she replied, "or sing."

We used to sing a lot, especially after a good lunch - which meant one where there was plenty to drink. Iris would lead the singing, in her high, reedy soprano - most often an Iris song. I was a little nervous of these Iris sing-songs, as I knew a lot of the words and tunes, but often not the political import, and Iris could be ferocious on the Irish question - just as she once, at a Sunday lunch, savaged an old friend, a Communist. These views struck her as Stalinist.

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Rex Features

casual nod of acknowledgment. She is as affectionate as she ever was, and when conversation gets stilted, she responds to a diversionary hug with her broad smile. On Sunday, she put sips of bread into her soup and ate them with her knife. It was not embarrassing to ask her if she would like a spoon.

While she does not really take part in the conversation, she responds to the rhythm, and her voice sometimes takes on the appropriate pitch or modulation; so you can be aware as though you are having a chat with her. "The power of concentration has gone," John has written, "along with the ability to form coherent sentences, and to remember where she is or has been."

Of course, we see Iris rarely. It is difficult for John. He was forced to reflect on the observation of a woman friend whose husband is an Alzheimer's sufferer, that it is "like being chained to a corpse, isn't it?" John has found some respite in

humour. Iris still responds to a joke - or at least to a joking tone: "A burst of laughter, snatches of doggerel, song, teasing nonsense rituals once lovingly exchanged, awake an abruptly happy response, and a sudden beaming smile... At cheerful moments, over drinks or in the car, Iris sometimes twitters away, incomprehensible but self-confident, happily convinced that an animated exchange is taking place."

However, John says he has abandoned reading aloud to Iris - she once especially loved Tolkein's *Lord of the Rings* and Lady Murasaki's *The Tale of Genji*. Though "she recognised the people and events described", John concluded that "the relation of such recognition to true memory is clearly a painful one." He thought that being read to was a reminder to Iris of the loss of identity.

Though Alzheimer's patients are not normally alert to these issues, "some sufferers do remain conscious of their state, paradoxical as this seems... When Iris speaks to me the result seems normal to her and, to me, surprisingly fluent, provided I do not listen to what is being said, but apprehend it in a matrimonial way, as the voice of familiarity, and thus of recognition."

There is a nobility in the role John plays now, and I think all John's and Iris's friends are aware of it. There are all the other aspects of a marriage that mere friends do not see - the bedtime rituals, the preparation of meals - and Iris must be dressed and bathed and groomed.

"Life," John writes, "is no longer bringing the pair of us 'closer and closer apart', in WD Hope's tenderly ambiguous words. Every day we move closer and closer together."

For 40 years, he says, they took their marriage for granted. No longer. "Purposefully, persistently, involuntarily, our marriage is now getting somewhere. It is giving us no choice, and I am glad of that."

EVEN WHEN you are doing something that is supposed to be fun, there are some occasions which you always dread. For me, playing George at squash is one of them. A badly behaved six-year-old trapped in the body of a six-foot bully, he'd be the squash club's *enfant terrible* if he wasn't pushing 40.

A bit of skulduggery, a hint of gamesmanship, even the occasional outrageous attempt to cheat is hearable, sometimes even cute, in a genuine six-year-old, particularly if it is your own offspring: "but Dad, I wasn't ready, play it again", or "on the line is out: my point, so there." They're just testing the boundaries you tell yourself and away you're so much bigger than them that they have to try anything to match you. But there is nothing cute about George, who combines the club tie and braying voice of the socially superior with the narrow-eyed certitude of the fanatic.

Most of the time it is easy to avoid him. You don't phone him to arrange a game, and, sorry, you are always uncannily busy if he suggests one. But every now and then you come up against him in the club knock-out or one of the monthly leagues and there's no escape.

The first time you step on court with George is at once bewildering and intimidating. There is none of the insane banter that usually precedes a game with a relative stranger: "Played anyone else recently?" "No, but of a doggy knee at the moment, so haven't been on court for a few weeks."

Instead, George prowls the court

angrily, like a caged animal, and

springs into vicious life when the ball is in play. He makes no attempt at subtlety, but winds up for each stroke and swings his racket in a great arc like a baseball player hitting home run. At a higher level of competition, this would be penalised for dangerous play, with no referee in attendance, you flatten yourself against the side wall for dear life.

So, what tactics should you adopt? If it is a league game of no great importance, you, let him win so you can get it over with as quickly and safely as possible. But if it is a knock-out match, the temptation is to fight fire with fire.

The first time you call a let, asking to replay the point after nearly losing your head to one of his murderous swipes, your request is dismissed with a drawled "You must be joking, old boy." If you persist, George - as blind as you might expect to his own failings - will accuse you of cheating.

He reminds me of Nigel, a regular tennis partner when I was 10 or 11 years old, who latched on to the notion that any disputed line call meant the point should be replayed. So, when his shot was



BRUCE MILLAR
What do you do when the six-foot bully with the racquet is really a badly behaved six-year-old in disguise?

clearly two feet out, he would demand a let. If he won the replay, he'd gloat: "See, I told you it was in," as if some benign deity had intervened on his behalf.

By the time that he had fully refined this technique, it was virtually impossible to win a point against Nigel unless he hit the ball into the net.

His other speciality was breaking rackets. The term "racket abuse" was not coined for another 15 years or so, when it became one of those innovations that didn't strike me as all that new. Nigel didn't so much abuse as torture rackets in those far-off days of wooden Dunlop Maxplys.

If he did contrive to lose a match, it was always the racket's fault, and - far from hurling it in a fit of immediate emotion - he would subject it to repeated and calculated double-handed blows to the ground, until finally the frame buckled. I could never work out how he persuaded his parents to buy him the next one.

Come-uppance is what is required for cheats, but where fiction may oblige life is more complicated. In the squash club's most recent knock-out competition, George sneered and bullied his way to the semi-final, at which point his opponent quite reasonably asked a fellow member to stand in as referee, while a dozen of us watched from the gallery. After the first couple of calls went against him, George realised that the game was up: he could neither swing his racket in the way that came naturally to him, nor demand the point when his opponent outplayed him. But instead of submitting meekly, George let out a great oath and stalked off the court, leaving us feeling oddly diminished, like a gang of seven-year-olds who had got their way.

As for Nigel - I haven't clapped eyes on him for almost 30 years, but recently I saw him (or someone with the same name) quoted in a newspaper as a teacher at one of those crammers that help pupils through their GCSEs and A-levels. I couldn't help wondering whether he coached his pupils in how to cheat their way through exams.

The major in mufti leads the battle of the buff

A retired artillery officer may seem an unlikely champion of naturists' rights, but to them he is a hero. By Jack O'Sullivan



Major Scarlett's defeat of obscenity charges caused red faces at Customs

tourists too. Good on you." But does he ever worry, I ask, that his videos, however innocent they might be, could fuel a paedophile's obsessions? The reply is categorical, though less than reassuring: "I'm not worried at all," he says.

"I'm not sure if these videos are likely to be of the slightest interest, because I don't know anything about paedophilia."

You can see the point he is making. To the major, a father of four who loves the freedom of "naked living", there is no connection between nudity and sex or indecency. "I find it relaxing, it's a great stress-releaser. It takes me through the last recession. It's wonderful to come home, strip off in the sun and feel uninhibited. You still worry, but not in the same sort of way."

He feels that his children, now grown up, were sated in the naturalist holiday camps than they would have been on an ordinary campsite. "A paedophile would stick out like a sore thumb. If someone started taking an undue interest in children, they would be spotted. In fact, I can't remember ever coming across anyone that I felt uncomfortable with in a naturist camp."

"I generally find that naturist families are much more at ease with themselves than with textiles - I hate that word - let's say, non-naturists. The boys are more at ease with girls, because nothing is hidden. There is none of this sneaking behind the bike shed, because they have seen it all before. There is no unhealthy curiosity, no false modesty."

As we chat, I look across Major

Scarlett and glance over the garden wall and note that the village church is next door. Does the vicar never object to him wandering around in the nip on Sunday mornings?

"No, no, I've never had any problems on that front," comes the stout reply. In fact, Major Scarlett thinks that the British public is a great deal less prudish than the press suggests. "There is much less of that nudge-nudge, wink-wink stuff these days. Since the case, we've had lots of publicity but no one in the village has looked away from us or seemed embarrassed."

At which point, a delivery man comes up the gravel drive and a man drops off a parcel. He smiles across the lawn. The major smiles back. The English are so polite.

Would he, I wonder, support any limits on nudity, apart from at the Mansion House dinners? The major ruminates for a few moments on Utopia. "I would like to see naturism legalised, given some standing under law. But I wouldn't have a desire to walk down Cheltenham High Street without any clothes. I don't wish to offend anyone. I'm not so strongly a naturist that I want to go out and evangelise."

"But I wouldn't mind being able to wander the hills around here without having to get dressed. It would be nice just to go down the road and look at the badger sets."

It is an eccentric thought, and a brave one, born of the self-confidence that you find both in the military and among naturists. Col Scarlett of the Heavy Brigade would surely have recognised his challenging great-grandson as a kindred spirit.

I don't know how Gordon Brown gets away with it," laments Major James Scarlett. "Imagine, wearing a lounge suit to the Mansion House dinner. He should have gone in black tie. Traditions deserve respect. I'd call it bloody rude."

It is probably a common attitude, here in the well-groomed Gloucestershire village of Sevenhampton. The major is almost red-faced as he talks. But you cannot miss his most striking feature - he is stark naked while lambasting the Chancellor's attire. And a fine figure he cuts among the overgrown topiary, a 58-year-old well-preserved in every department.

The irony of his comments seems to escape the major as he strides stonks around his garden in that straight-backed military way, closely followed by three miniature dachshunds. He is preoccupied with a more important matter - nudity. And like his ancestors as far back as he can remember, he is leading a campaign. At the Battle of Balaklava, his namesake commanded the Heavy Brigade. The great-grandson, who retired from the Royal Artillery in 1976, has suddenly become standard bearer for British naturism.

Last week, Major Scarlett won his case against Customs and Excise officers who had claimed that some of his books and videos were indecent. His victory was the first ray of sunshine in what has been a grim, wet, shivery summer for nudists.

In April 1997, officers had raided the major's home, a rambling 12-bedroom Elizabethan mansion in the

Vindication has turned Major Scarlett into a hero among British naturists, tired of being humiliated by decades of sniggering and bored with the parody of endless *Carry On* comedies. "I visited the Turkish baths the other day in Gloucester, where the naturists meet. A lot of people were absolutely delighted with the outcome of the case," he says.

"There has been a degree of fear among parents about whether it is any longer acceptable to take pictures of naked children. I was speaking to the father of an 18-month-old boy who says that he now feels much more comfortable about taking pictures of him in the bath." The Army has also proved to be a great source of support. You may be surprised that folk so obsessed with uniform are into this sort of thing. But I once met a veteran at a naturist camp who wore only his British Legion cap adorned with the badges of nudist beaches he had visited around the world. "I've had several letters from former colleagues," adds the major with delight. "They say, 'Hey, we're na-

John Lawrence

REAL BRITANNIA

What does it mean to be British? PART SIX

'We stood alone against the enemy'



EMPIRE BRITANNIA

Ann Treneman on fair play

To the Cavalry and Guards Club, then, for a spot of lunch and a serious exposure to Rule Britannia-type artefacts. The idea is to find out what it is like to be British if you're the kind of Brit that belongs to this kind of club. My host is Miles Hudson, a 73-year-old author, farmer and retired major who is, not incidentally, a rather good sport. "I hope you aren't going to make fun of all this," he says over a pre-lunch sherry. Certainly not, I say. After all, why do the easy thing when it's so much more interesting to do the other?

We are sitting in the Ladies Room. When Miles had suggested I ask for this room at the front desk, I had wondered why I needed to know where the loo was so early on. Then I realised he was merely giving me the facts of club life. The Ladies Room is an extremely floral experience and has the added advantage of having fewer pictures of men in uniform than those parts of the club that women can't reach.

'Remember... you are an Englishman and have consequently won first prize in the lottery of life'

There is still quite a surfel of the things, not least a beefy one of Wellington covering the entire front and back of the menu. We walk to the dining room past a sweeping staircase. "God, look at all those old men," harumphs Miles at the paintings. "Can't stand them." But if you were a lady who liked a man in uniform, you'd be in a constant swoon.

This kind of place has a bad press in Britain. When I told people about my lunch date, most started pretending to twiddle a handkerchief moustache and making barking type noises. "Colonel Blimp I presume," they shouted. I'm sure there must be such characters about, but Miles is not one of them, though he has had a traditional kind of life that hardly exists anymore: public school, army, political career, author and farmer. His idea of what it

means to be British is shaped by the past; by the Empire, by the Second World War, and by his stint as political secretary to Sir Alec Douglas-Home at the Foreign Office. Duty and sacrifice have played a part. He joined the Army in 1943 at the age of 18. During the fiftieth anniversary of D-Day, Miles gave a talk to some schoolchildren about what it was like to be young during the war. "I thought I would play them recordings of Winston Churchill's speeches. Hearing that voice – we will fight them on the beaches – you remember that we really thought that we were going to be invaded," he says. "I had to put the speeches at the end because they always make me cry. I suppose it's all part of my generation's vast pride in being British. We stood alone against the greatest enemy the world has ever known, for a year. I can hardly say it without weeping."

This patriotism is an emotional affair that seems barely contained in the land of the stiff upper lip. So it is a relief to call the Foreign Office and hear real horror in the man from the FO's voice when I ask about what it means to be British. "Feelings?" he asked. "Feelings? Sorry we're not good on feelings and that kind of thing. It's very difficult to give you a government position on what it means to be British, other than wonderful of course."

Of course. This is something that Adrian Furnham, a professor of psychology at University College London, knows about both from work and from growing up as an expat in Africa. "Young people don't understand their enormous imperial legacy. It was Cecil Rhodes who said 'Remember my boy, that you are an Englishman and have consequently won first prize in the lottery of life.' That's a very good quote and my father said that to me regularly."

So when did he start to wonder if this was true? "Well, I have never wondered," he admits and laughs. "I genuinely think that to be British is a huge advantage in life. You are brought up with tolerant, reasonable, intelligent people with a wonderful history and nothing to be ashamed of. That's not true of many other countries." But, I say, this is not true of Britain either. "What in particular?" he asks. I mumble something about colonial excesses. "Of course there were some of those. Leaving Aden wasn't a very

good example. But I think if you took a balance sheet, we were a force for good in the world."

Miles would agree and, in fact, had already done so back at our lunch at the Cavalry Club. "There are great negative sides to it but I think we brought the rule of law, fair play, roads, railways, etc. to these places." What about the negatives?

"I suppose the biggest was lack of self-confidence, which still continues. They were bossed about for too long." We talk about the kind of man who made the Empire. "Not very imaginative. Not very intellectual. Brave. Honest. Decent. Arrogant about being British and not particularly ambitious for himself."

This, he says, was an ideal man to go out and run a district the size

of a country. Now such a man might be found anywhere, even behind the wheel of a taxi. Miles thinks he may have found one on his way to our lunch. "The taxi driver who brought me here. He was in the Royal Tank Regiment for 17 years and he went on about how marvellous it was. It was something solid in his life. It is about being proud to be British. I can't put it any other way."

Not far away down Piccadilly is the Naval and Military Club (better known as the In and Out Club after the signs directing traffic). The club secretary is John Stevens and he is wearing naval crowns on his cuffs. In this world gentlemen wear ties and jackets and lighting is supplied via chandeliers. He likes traditions such as Wimbledon, the

Queen's Birthday Parade, Henley, the Queen's Christmas Speech.

"They all add up together to making us British." So what does that mean? "The words reasonableness, integrity and honesty come to mind. I'd like to think that they are all part of our make-up. A man's word is his bond." He doesn't think that having a stiff upper lip means a lack of emotion. "There is a time to be brave and there is a time to be emotional. A stiff upper lip is really the opposite of cowardice."

We discuss fair play. He believes it to be a British invention and starts talking about straight bats.

Fair play is interesting because it is the only concept that has adapted itself to our new "Cool Britannia" age. Mark Leonard, who wrote the

recent pamphlet on how to repack Britain for the think tank Demos, says the traditional British identity was based on five "stories". These were a belief in the Empire; faith in great institutions such as Parliament; seeing Britain as an industrial powerhouse; its status as home of the English language and as the inventor of sport. "But what has happened over the past 50 years is that each of these has become unpicked," he says. "The empire has disappeared, the great institutions are a laughing stock, the English language isn't particularly English anymore. But some of the things hold true for younger people. The idea of fair play lives on in other forms." This, he says, includes the idea that everyone deserves a "fair

go at life" and institutions created to serve this idea range from the NHS to charities.

Back at the Cavalry Club, lunch is drawing to a close with coffee served in the floral abundance of the Ladies Room. Miles Hudson is worried about the way things are going these days. He doesn't like the fact that no one seems to be able to stand on their own two feet any more.

"Nothing nasty is ever supposed to happen to anyone. We are becoming completely divorced from life and death. You must never see a corpse now, and milk comes out of a machine and not a cow. It's all becoming rather ersatz, if you see what I mean." And, with that, we walked out of the club and into what passes for the real world.

A Second World War veteran on Remembrance Day. For many, the idea of what it means to be British is shaped by the Empire and the War Brian Harris



The crafty Cockney risk-venturer straight out of Defoe



BETTING BRITANNIA

Bookmakers by Laura Thompson



Race track bookmakers 'impart a tang, an edge, an immediacy. They are making a living in one of the trickiest games around'

is true only of betting shops. My kind of bookmaker is a chancer, a one-man band, not a faceless manager at Ladbrokes plc. I begrudge him nothing if he is clever enough to make a living at his trade: as someone who does, as an amateur what he does professionally, I know how damn near impossible it is.

My favourite bookmaker, whom I used to see standing at both the dogs and the horses, had an incredible hair which had brought him a vast house in Surrey: equidistant from Sandown, Epsom and Kempton Park race tracks. He was extremely generous ("put your money away") when buying drinks after racing, though admittedly most of what he

was spending had originally belonged to everyone else.

He was, I remember, aghast when I told him that I lived in Notting Hill. "Cor blimey, Laura," he said, his face white with concern against his black leather coat. "What do you want to live in a rough heddin' 'ole like that for? You wanna get y'self a place somewhere a bit decent, love."

He lived, to the full, the dream of bourgeois luxury. Yet at the same time he lived hand to mouth, on his wits, out of his satchel, caring to make or to lose 10 grand a day: a risk-venturer straight out of Defoe, in fact, playing the crafty cockney straight out of Rank films. A real British stereotype, as I say.

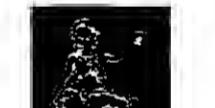
Yvonne Symmonds, 60, secretary, Worcester

I THINK THE British are tenacious in the face of opposition, and we are highly two-faced. We are very hypocritical, like all that political sleaze that took a long time to come out. It is wonderful to be part of a country that has civilised half the world and which has gone on for a thousand years without being beaten. I think we should be proud of that. I would sooner die than see this little island taken over by somebody else.

I love the tranquillity of the countryside. There are still huge chunks of the UK that are tranquil, such as places in Yorkshire and South Wales. We have been farming the same way ever since the Domesday Book and I am happy Prince Charles says what he wants about genetic engineering. It shows that we are a

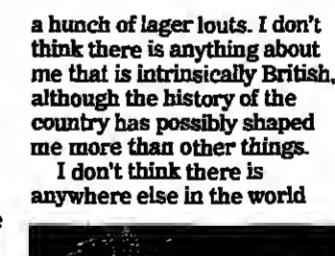
democracy. I can think of nothing negative about being British, but the country has got faster and filthier, and as much as I think Prescott is a union man, he has started the ball rolling on controlling the traffic. We are turning into a something-for-nothing society, but that is because we do not have any challenges and everything is done for us.

Timothy Bates, 44, design consultancy director, Surrey BEING BRITISH means different things to different people. A football hooligan sees his country differently from the liberal middle classes. The class system is still seen as being a classic British idiosyncrasy, but today the class system is less relevant. America and Europe have influenced us as communications have become faster. It is difficult to say how others see us. From a Spanish hotelier's point of view, we are



VOX BRITANNIA

How British are you?



Taylor Scipio, 18, actor, north London
I THINK THAT different cultures see Britain in different lights. The Americans seem to have this stereotype of merry old England, where it is raining and foggy and policemen are on the beat. They have got that condescending view of us because they won their independence from us.

When I was 11, we had to fill in an equal opportunities form which asked what ethnic minority we were. It had categories such as white European, black African, Caribbean and black UK. That was the box I filled in without even thinking about it. My dad is from South America, my mum is English and I was born here. I would never think about myself as anything else.

I think British people are patriotic but we're modestly proud of our country and what the Empire achieved. We're not like the Americans who have flags everywhere. If you saw that in London you would think it was the BNP headquarters.

If a British man does not follow football he is seen as a bit weird. My generation does not have anything to be patriotic about apart from football. We have not lived through a war, unless you count the Gulf war which was more like a video game far away from England.

What I love about Britain is that it is so multi-cultural. So many of my friends are from different places, such as Iran, Germany, the Caribbean, Cyprus and Turkey. This generation is one of the most accepting of different cultures. Nobody questions it and we all get along.

INTERVIEWS BY
CAYTE WILLIAMS

SO AUTHENTIALLY British is the bookmaker that he should, perhaps, be represented in the Millennium Dome, as a camel-coated hologram. Perhaps there could also be a virtual reality Bookmaker Experience, in which you approach the hologram holding out a £20 note. It takes it from you and the money vanishes for ever into cyberspace.

Of course, so authentically British is the bookmaker that he would never show his boat-race anywhere near anything as bogus as the Dome. He may be a stereotype but he is, thank you very much, a real stereotype.

His image is perfectly predictable. Just as you think he will, he wears dogtooth checks and dubious shoes. Just as you think he will, he shouts: "Three to one the four dog!" then changes it to 5-2 when he sees you running towards him. Just as you think he will, he talks the ripe and delicious argot of his trade: "They're very naughty boys, slinging in these non-triers all over the shop, but they'll get their uppings."

In fact, standing on his box at the racetrack, his hapless little vole-faced puntier chalking up prices by his side, the bookmaker creates an atmosphere as full-bodied as a pea-souper: a piece of living theatre.

He does it because he loves it – all good bookmakers are showmen, even show-offs – but he also does it because he knows that his public expects it. He knows that we want to see him do his stuff. He knows, too, that we will pay good money for it. After all, trackside punters do not

bet with bookmakers just because it is tax-free. They do it because it is fun and because they, too, can become part of that living theatre. That is why they complain about the ambience at racetracks abroad, where there is only the Tote to bet with, no "Del-boy, the Crafty Cockney" flashing his jewellery and bawling: "4-4 the field." No fun.

And my admiration for them is boundless. Their brains are at work all the time. They are always on the qui vive, always looking out for the bit of information that will put them ahead of the rest, always honing their instincts, always calculating.

They were probably born that way. While the rest of us were being taught that if Peter has half a pound of apples and John has nine ounces, poor Peter has fewer apples, they were learning that if Del Boy lays the winning favourite at 15-8 and Scouser O'Toole has offered only 7-4, poor Del Boy gets stuffed. It is the way they have to be. Getting it wrong could make the difference between a holiday in the Cayman Islands and one on Carney Island.

People who know little about bookmakers say that they have a licence to print money, but in fact this

is true only of betting shops. My kind of bookmaker is a chancer, a one-man band, not a faceless manager at Ladbrokes plc. I begrudge him nothing if he is clever enough to make a living at his trade: as someone who does, as an amateur what he does professionally, I know how damn near impossible it is.

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People who know little about bookmakers say that they have a licence to print money, but in fact this

Jimmy Pursey may now be a part-time model. But he'll always be a full-time punk. By Matthew Rowan

Still hard up after all these years

Jimmy Pursey is a punk rocker. He has been since 1975, and that is still all he wants to be; it is his lifetime's work. However, the lead singer of Sham 69 – the band most famous for such late-Seventies street anthems as "Borstal Breakout," "If the Kids are United," "Hurry up Harry" and "Angels with Dirty Faces" – keeps on going to places you would not think he would go to.

Such as a bus in Bushy Park, on the outskirts of west London, where he has joined up with the E-team – the travelling band of eco-warriors who defied the bulldozers at sites such as Twyford Down and Newbury – to fight the proposed redevelopment of six acres of disused land.

Or a TV advert for Campari. The aperitif is trying to rebrand itself as a drink the most hardened men can aspire to be seen with, so Pursey plays a cat burglar; the extras include "Mad" Frankie Fraser, and the whole thing is set to the theme music of *Get Carter*.

Or the catwalk. Over the years he has modelled for Katharine Hamnett, Alexander McQueen, The Gap, Comme des Garçons and, most recently, Diesel. It has aroused plenty of curiosity: isn't that Jimmy Pursey? How come he is modelling clothes? And all the time, he feels, there is a tacit suspicion that he has sold out.

He is used to loose criticism. Partly because of "Hurry up Harry", he has been portrayed as a lager lout, but the man who sang "we're going down the pub" does not even drink. "People ring me up and say

"do you want to wear a pair of jeans and get paid two grand?" And I say "yes, thank you" because I get paid no money for what I do."

What he does do is punk rock. Sham 69 are still doing gigs and writing songs about street life and broken lives because those issues have not gone away. There has never been much money in it, but any sign of wealth is proof of a cop-out if you are seen as a rebel. At the height of Pursey's fame in the late Seventies, he bought a place in the country. This was described in the music press as a sprawling estate, when in reality it was a Jacobean cottage. "Because of who I was," he says, "it was like I'd sold the Red Flag and moved into Ceausescu's palace."

After the cottage, he lived in a caravan for five years; he now shares a rented flat in Weybridge, Surrey, with his long-time girlfriend, Louise Bailey, who also models, and their three-year-old son, Jack. He has spent 23 years with Sham 69 on and off, so why do people accuse him of betraying his roots?

"The modelling can't do me any harm," he explains, "because if someone says 'You've sold out' then I say: 'Come to my house. Look, here's my bank balance. Where have I sold out?' All that's happened is someone's asked me to wear some clothes. By wearing those clothes I can keep Sham 69 going, because no record company wants to tire out my records. I have to get the money together, make an album cheaply and then say to a record company: 'Do you want to buy this off me?'"

And, at least as far as the established labels are concerned, they do

not. As Pursey sees it, punk is supposed to have had its day 20 years ago, and who wants some 43-year-old shouting from the rooftops about social injustice? Sham's last album, *The A-Files*, was released independently last year after being turned down by Creation, Oasis's label.

But he still believes in punk because it incites people to be constructive. "Intellectuals told us: 'You can't change the world.' But we did change the world."

It is the kind of spirit he sees in another person who tried to show that anything is possible if you break down the barriers: "I know Lady Diana was a punk at heart. She was upsetting everyone by being an agent provocateur."

"She was saying: 'Yes, of course I can join in and wear a beautiful dress.' But then she might be off treading on land-mines in Angola.

She was saying you can be anyone you like – why do you have to be boxed in?"

It is also the kind of spirit he sees now in environmental campaigners. He calls them "punks" because they have grabbed the conservation agenda and made it "we've got to do something". The proceeds of Sham 69's last two singles, "Swampy" and "Rainbow Warrior", went not to the band but to conservationists, and, if he can find a buyer, all the revenue raised from the next single, "Direct Action", will go to the E-team.

When he is not giving away money, Pursey is rejecting chances to make money. These range from acting jobs – he turned down the lead roles in *Quadrophenia* and *The Wall* – to fashion assignments and even gigs. Three months ago he was offered "serious money" to play a festival in Stuttgart and rejected it

because Sham have already played there. But in September or October he will be performing in Argentina. "I'd rather go somewhere that's never seen Sham 69 before."

It is a demanding personal manifesto, when most of the money you make feeds a career that makes you no money. And it is still more demanding when you take on jobs only if you are skint, and even then only if they are right. Pursey, however, does not so much plead poverty as choose it. "I'm skint because I write politically," he explains. "But the important thing is that I'm probably more Jimmy Pursey now than I've ever been in my life. I know when I say what I say that I don't say it from my bank account and I don't say it from my happy-go-lucky little middle-class suburban lifestyle."

It's not a dirty rotten job, but someone's gotta do it.



Jimmy Pursey, dedicated punk rocker and part-time model

Rex Features

ARTS DIARY

DAVID LISTER

I ONCE wrote a spoof story, an April Fool, that a television drama department was planning to show a new season of plays featuring under-age sex, incest, rape, an interracial murder, and a woman having her tongue cut out.

They were, of course, all Shakespeare plays. All spoofs come true in the end. And this week we learn that ITV has commissioned a number of well-known writers to update Shakespeare into police dramas, thrillers and modern comedies.

Talks are said to be already under way to produce the first three plays, with Andrew Davies, adapted of *Pride and Prejudice*, Jimmy McGovern, the playwright behind *Cracker*, and Paula Milne, who wrote *The Politician's Wife*. Other writers being mooted include Hanif Kureishi, Malcolm Bradbury, Alan Bleasdale, Lynda La Plante and Simon Nye.

While it is diverting to envisage Macbeth pleading "gissa dagger" in a Bleasdale adaptation, or spilling the beans about life with Lady Mac in a Kureishi version, the whole exercise is a depressing idea. Like the over-praised foreign language films of

Shakespeare that were in vogue in the Sixties, it is to write off the importance of his use of language.

Shakespeare told thrilling and funny, though not always original stories; but he was also a poet, writing in a poetic form. Why does ITV assume that its audience cannot be entertained, moved and transported by such poetry?

Why is Andrew Davies, who used much of Jane Austen's own language and idiom in his adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, apparently reluctant to extend the same latitude to Shakespeare? Why indeed use adaptations at all? The amount of genuine

Shakespeare on the box, on any channel, is pitiful. Just

what are they afraid of? And the project is likely to cost around £28m – a sum that would enable the RSC to tour the real thing to every corner of the country or, better still, to put the real thing on television.

A PETITION to stop the threat of charging for use of the British Library is to be launched next week. This was decided upon at a private gathering of library users at the Drill Hall in London.

According to my woman at the meeting, it was a productive but rather strange affair. Those in attendance were largely academics including, I gather, a disproportionate number of Italian scholars from University College London. And sprinkled among them were members of the Socialist Workers Party, an organisation I thought had more or less ceased to exist in the recent past.

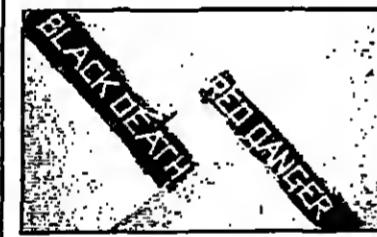
"Not so," says my woman. "They want to make free admission their issue. They still use the same sort of language and talked a lot about "The Campaign". But they are rather useful to us. They do the Xeroxing."

WE ALL have gaps in our knowledge, but... One of my colleagues on a national news agency was telling me this week of knowledge gaps in the youthful staff on his newsdesk. When the actor Michael Denison's death was announced on Wednesday, the youthful staff got rather excited. They had not heard of Denison, and assumed this was the dazzling Brazilian footballer Denison.

But I can beat that. Queueing for the film *Titanic*, I was remarking to a friend about the cost of filming the scene in which "the boat sinks". The person in front of me turned round, glared, and said indignantly: "Thank You Very Much!"

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

BY FIONA STURGES



THE EXHIBITION
BRUCE NAUMAN

A selection of work by the American artist, mostly comprised of blazing neon signs and video installations. The show is curated by Christine Van Assche of the Pompidou Centre in Paris.



THE GIG
JAMES BROWN

The granddaddy of soul shows that he's not ready to quit yet (though he can't still manage the splits) as he makes his long-awaited appearance at the Barbican as part of the *Inventing America* concert series.



THE FILM
THE GINGERBREAD MAN

Robert Altman's rain-soaked adaptation of John Grisham's novel. Kenneth Branagh – still parading his lago beard – plays an adulterous attorney who becomes involved with a mysterious waitress.

OVERVIEW

A disgruntled Richard D North commented "it is a fascinating example of the levels of guff and ennui that affluent society started producing in the Sixties." Nauman "comes close to banishing one's interest in any art which has to be installed and yearn for anything which needs no more than a few nails in a wall." *The Guardian* disagreed. "It is magnificent. It is awful. It is heart-stopping. It is grand and terrible and worth all the pain... a mind-battering assault, as stimulating as it is aggressive." *The Daily Telegraph* likened it to "the seventh circle of Dante's Inferno," and discovered "deep, irremediable melancholy beneath its superficial aggression."

Critical View

Bruce Nauman is at the Hayward Gallery, South Bank, London SE1, until 6 September. For booking and enquiries, call 0171-261 0127.

Our View

Traditionalists and aesthetes will be sorely disappointed. Never one to make the viewer comfortable, Nauman's art is more intimidating than uplifting and assaults the ear as much as the eye. This is not a show for the faint-hearted, but it remains compelling all the same. Not to be missed.

"Although no longer able to dazzle with the fleet footwork and athleticism of his heyday, Brown retains the charisma of a pioneering band leader," exclaimed Geoff Brown, and concluded "Brown still clearly remains a major influence." "Given his notoriously erratic behaviour in the past decade, it was a small mercy that James turned up at all," remarked the *Evening Standard*, berating the show as "high on spectacle but low on substance." "The show did not live up to its early promise," agreed the *Daily Telegraph*, complaining of "a lack of momentum... As time went on, it degenerated into a cheesy, Las Vegas-style revue."

On View

Continuing the Barbican's *Inventing America* series, you can see "Shades of Blues", featuring Taj Mahal and Eric Bibb, tomorrow. For enquiries, call 0171-638 4141.

At 65 years old, it's too much to expect Brown to match the explosive shows of the old days. There may be less of the fancy footwork, but the privilege of watching the Godfather of Funk perform a string of legendary classics should be more than enough to get your hips swingin' and your shoulders shakin'.

THIS WEEK IN THE SEVEN-SECTION

INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY



Oh Mrs Thomas!

Caitlin, wife of Dylan, as she has never been seen before. Blake Morrison glimpses the wilder side of the poet's wife

PLUS

To Greenland's icy mountains for some hunting, shooting and fishing

NATURE
NOTE

THE SHEETS of powdery blue now grace many fields are linseed, a variety of flax grown for its oil-producing seeds. After the violent yellow glare of oilseed rape, the soft colour of the flower falls easily on the eye - but it may not be around for much longer. At the moment linseed attracts the highest subsidy of any arable crop - about £200 per acre - but one of the Agenda 2000 proposals for reform of the Common Agricultural Policy is that subsidies on all combine-harvested crops should become the same and, without its special support, linseed will be uneconomic for British farmers.

At the moment they grow it mainly because of the subsidy, but also because it acts as a useful break-crop, preparing the ground for wheat the following year.

The seeds which form when the flowers have gone over are minute, and the crop generally yields less than a ton of seed per acre, compared with up to four tons for wheat.

Once, at the beginning of the cricket season every schoolboy used to scrape his bat and give it a fresh coat of linseed oil.

Now the product is used for cattle feed and in industrial processes such as the manufacture of linoleum.

DUFF HART-DAVIS

Vintage Bury St Edmunds, 1998



The Rondo grape

Peter Macdiarmid

Vines were grown in Britain by the Romans, so why not cultivate them in the era of global warming? Patricia Cleveland-Peck visits a vineyard with potential

How commercially viable is grape-growing in this country? Well, Charles Macready, 40, is reasonably optimistic. Together with his partner, Jillian Simm, he runs a Suffolk vineyard owned by the National Trust.

It is set in the grounds of Ickworth House, that eccentric 18th-century house that has the famous rotunda.

The vineyard is in the old kitchen garden, an idyllic spot sheltered by brick walls, overlooking the river Lymet and surrounded by tranquil parkland.

For centuries, gangs of gardeners toiled long and hard here to produce fruit and vegetables for the big house, and now the somewhat smaller team of Charles and Jillian is labouring within the same walls to give the garden new life.

Three years ago they came across this abandoned paradise and developed the idea of starting a vineyard. Jillian had studied hor-

ticulture and viticulture, and was then managing the nearby Wyken vineyard at Bury St Edmunds.

"I also learned a lot from my father who, after a visit to Australia in the Seventies, decided that wine production was the thing of the future," she says.

Charles interrupts with a Californian joke: "If you want a small fortune, the best way is to start with a large one and plant a vineyard..."

Undeterred by such warnings, he and Jillian set to work. Charles took a year's course in viticulture and the pair approached the National Trust with a proposal to convert the walled garden. "The Trust was keen and supportive," Charles recalls.

The National Trust proved to be a model landlord, undertaking the mammoth task of clearing the footings of some derelict greenhouses and providing 300 tons of topsoil to fill the holes. Charles and Jillian then set to. They prepared the soil and, as vines need support, hired a tractor and post-rammer and put in the first trellises themselves.

"Spring frost is one of the vine's main enemies," Charles explains.

"In an older plant, only the buds are vulnerable; but because these were

so young, the whole plant was killed."

There was nothing for it but to re-stock and start again.

"We couldn't give up, we'd invested too much," Jillian adds.

"Besides which, we knew the frosts couldn't go on and on."

The walled garden at Ickworth is flanked by two ancient frost-channeling walls that extend down to the river, which has been land-

scaped into a lake. "These were built to divert frost from the garden - water raises temperature, so the frost 'doesn't hang around,'" Charles explains. "It doesn't quite work - the hill opposite is higher and it sends down frost too - but undoubtedly it helps a bit."

So is the venture viable? Having survived the loss of those first vines, three years on Charles and Jillian are optimistic.

"We've had our first vintage," says Jillian. "Only 300 bottles, but in 1996 we planted the other side of the vineyard with Rondo and pinot noir vines and these should produce our first red grape harvest this September. All being well, we can expect some 4,000 bottles."

"It helps, of course, that we can market all the wine here through the National Trust," adds Charles.

"The UK does produce good wine, and has done so for a long time."

Accepted wisdom has it that the Romans introduced viticulture to Britain. However, the UK Vineyards Association reports that a

prehistoric grape pip was found by archaeologists in Dorset, suggesting that Bronze Age man may have been growing vines.

Wine-making by no means ended with the Romans: as many as 40 vineyards were recorded in the Domesday Book.

Even as late as the 18th century, Charles Hamilton of Painswick wrote: "My wine has a finer flavour than the best champagne."

"It can be done," says Charles.

Visitors to the National Trust's Ickworth House, Horing, Bury St Edmunds (01284 735270), can see the vineyard as part of their visit. The house and gardens are open from March to November; the gardens are open daily, between 10am and 5pm.

Admission costs £5.20 for adults, £2.20 for children. Guided tours of the vineyard are held on the last Sunday in the month, from 11am to 12.15pm. These cost £6.50; the price includes a tasting of Ickworth wine. Call the above number to book.



No one knows the age of Dorset's giant chalk man

The giant in your footsteps

Weekend walk: pay your respects to a famous chalk giant. By Sophie Poklewski Koziell

THIS IS a gentle, circular walk through chalk downland, around the wide valley of the Cerne River. It starts at Cerne Abbas, at the striking chalk-cut figure of a giant. He is the outline of a magnificent man, erect in every sense of the word, striding across the hillside, club in hand. Despite his neolithic appearance, there is some doubt as to how old he really is: some think he is Roman (AD200-ish), some even think he may be only about 200 years old. Whatever his origins, he is a true giant in all proportions and locals still swear that sleeping within its sight works a powerful fertility spell for women.

Starting at the viewpoint for the giant on the A352, follow the signs to the picnic area then walk past it and turn right on to a footpath, just before the stone bridge. Follow the river Cerne into the village, and turn into Long Street. This is a historian's dream: nearly every house is of a different era and style. Thatched roofs join slate, and brick lies alongside stone, flint and timber. Look out for the early 19th-century, many-pained shop fronts opposite the New Inn. The village store is full of local advertisements - from pick-your-own to a toenail-cutting service (£5).

Turn left after the Red Lion pub into Abbey Street, towards the

church of St Mary the Virgin. This has some unusual painted wall texts inside, and some rather worn, wide-mouthed, monster corbels on the outside. Opposite the church stands a row of splendid 15th-century houses. Their roofs dip and curl; the beams haphazardly support bulging walls.

Carry on up the street, past the well-stocked duck pond to the remains of the Benedictine abbey - well worth a look, at the cost of a small donation in the honesty box. Continue through the arched gateway into the graveyard and follow the signs to St Augustine's well. Surrounded by crumbling medieval walls, and draped with ferns and ivy, with clear water running down through a series of shallow ponds, this makes a tranquil spot for a brief pause.

Numerous myths surround the spring, but the most amusing is that St Augustine, on his round of evangelising, asked some thirsty shepherds what they desired to drink: water or beer. They piously answered "water", whereupon the saint struck the ground with his staff and a spring sprang up. Wrong answer, I suppose.

Retrace your steps to the arched gateway and then take the path marked on the wooden post - "Giant's Hill". Once out of the graveyard, head diagonally up across the

path drops steeply before curving right. Continue on the path for three-quarters of a mile, across the chalk downland. Shortly after a small wood there are two gates: go through the first and turn left immediately. Carry on for half a mile until the path meets a partially Tarmac track. Turn left on to this track and continue downhill. Minterne House can be seen down to the left in the valley bottom. About a quarter of a mile on, just after the end of a small wood, take the gate on the left into the field. The path is not clear, but walk diagonally down, through the grazing sheep, to a gate on the right, mid-field. Then continue down to a small wooden gate beside a copse, where the path becomes clear again. Keep straight along the path over a ford, past the church and into Minterne Magna.

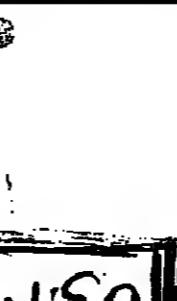
Here it is possible to continue the walk through the gardens of Minterne House (entrance £2-£3). There is a wonderful, mile-long walk, well marked, that leads through the woodland valley, past small cascades and lakes. The gardens were landscaped by "Capability" Brown and are particularly known for their rhododendrons, magnolias and azaleas. The valley.

To return to Cerne Abbas, continue left along the road past Minterne House.

After the next corner, pass through the gate on the right and up the hill, through an avenue of lime trees. After the gate at the top there is a small quarry ahead. Turn left and walk across this top field towards the gate at the far corner. After the gate, head for the top left-hand corner of the field, through a break in the hedge and on to a grassy bridle path. Turn left and follow this path as it plunges down through a wood and out through a line of ivy-hugged sycamore, on to a terraced road. Turn left and walk along the road. Cerne Manor House can be seen ahead.

About a quarter of a mile before the house, take a footpath on the right that starts from the verge and goes up towards, and then behind, a line of trees. This footpath crosses the road and continues in a straight line towards Cerne Abbas, which can be seen in the distance. The path meets the road after a white gate. Turn left, and continue until the road meets the large A352. Then turn right, and the parking area is visible just ahead. Cerne Abbas is well stocked with pubs and tea-houses to quench a variety of thirsts and appetites.

Length of walk: 5-6 miles. Map: Ordnance Survey Explorer 117 or OS Landranger 194



Paradise rises from the swamp

The simple act of flooding an old lake in Cheshire has created a haven for wildlife.
By Duff Hart-Davis

Acynic might easily describe Blakemere Moss as a dirty great hole in the ground. Yet to me this huge bog in Delamere Forest Park, near Chester, is charged with mystery and excitement, especially now that it is once again filling with water after nearly two centuries of artificially induced drought.

When I first saw it 18 months ago, it immediately put me in mind of Conan Doyle's prehistoric lost world. Then it was dry, but now its appearance is even more striking. Imagine a shallow, oblong crater, 30 acres in extent, surrounded by forest. All round its rim slender, straight-trunked Scots pines rise from tall banks, closing it off from surrounding civilisation and giving it an air of secrecy.

In cloudy weather sheets of black water gloomily reflect the ring of trees, and from far out in the lagoons come the screech and chatter of nesting birds. No matter that the noisiest creatures are only gulls; in this primeval setting the cacophony could easily be emanating from leathery, bat-like flying reptiles with a 15-ft wing span.

The magic of Blakemere Moss derives from its antiquity, and from the extraordinary way in which nature formed it. At the end of the last ice age, maybe 10,000 years ago, two immense chunks broke off a retreating glacier and settled on this site. Their colossal weight gradually forced down the ground beneath them and left two contiguous depressions known as kettle-holes, into which water drained from the land around, slowly forming a marsh.

Until early in the 19th century it remained one of Cheshire's numerous mere, or mosses. Then the government of the day conceived the idea that the area should grow oak, to supply the Navy with ships' timbers. Napoleonic prisoners were put to work digging drainage



Blakemere Moss - to some, a dirty great hole in the ground, to others, an area charged with mystery and excitement

Tom Pilston

ditches, but their labours were largely futile, partly because the underlying peat had accumulated in places to a depth of nearly 20 feet, and partly because there was only one exit channel from the entire bowl, so that the land never dried out enough to grow good trees.

Enter the Forestry Commission, which, in the Fifties, tried again and planted conifers, according to the received wisdom of the day.

Yet these too failed to flourish, in spite of prodigious efforts to keep the ditches open, and in 1994 the commission took a momentous decision: to abandon all their attempts to produce a commercial crop.

Instead, it was decided, the area

should be returned to wetland. For men dedicated to growing trees, this meant a major mental adjustment - hut down came the western hemlock, sitka spruce and Scots pine, opening up a wide vista. Out went nearly 5,000 tons of timber. Thousands more tons of lop and top were piled into heaps and burnt in the spring of 1997. A new concrete sluice was built to control the exit channel, and last summer boards were slotted in to dam the outflow.

The result has been a spectacular success. As the water level rose and the lowest areas of the basin began to flood, hawks poured in: gulls, ducks, geese, swans, moorhens and coots all found the

new lagoons much to their liking. Pondweed - probably brought in on the birds' feet - started to proliferate, turning some areas brilliant green. Soon the place was alive with insects, dragonflies among them; swallows and swifts began hawking over the water.

Locals who regularly walk or cycle around the moss were thrilled by the change. In February, when the level had to be temporarily lowered so that the foresters could fell a few more trees that were about to be flooded, the office was swamped by telephone calls from people demanding to know where all the water was going. Now it is inching up again. Numberless small islands

break the surface, but over the old ditches the water is probably eight feet deep.

For Peter Rawlinson, the forest manager, the easy, physical part of the operation is over:

"Everyone can see that the mere's flooded," he says. "We've created a wonderful conservation site. But the question is, what's going to happen next?"

His future management options are fairly limited. He can control vegetation to some extent by raising or lowering the water level, and one priority is to flood and kill the birch, which otherwise would take over much of the site. Yet conflict will inevitably arise between the

demands of different species. Inundation will kill the birch trees quite quickly, but it will also kill other desirable plants in the lowest areas. As Mr Rawlinson says, he will "just have to watch and see how things develop as nature works out a new balance".

One ambitious scheme - at the moment no more than a gleam in his eye - is to connect Blakemere with other mosses in the forest by digging channels that could act as wildlife corridors. A particular target is Black Lake, which supports a colony of rare, white-faced dragonflies and lies less than half a mile away.

The project has provided a golden opportunity for Anya Moon, a

postgraduate student at Staffordshire University, who is making a two-year study of flora and fauna, and of the chemical properties of the moss. Already she has made one exciting discovery - of sundew, the tiny carnivorous plant with leaves fringed with red spikes, which curl over to trap insects. Until she spotted it, nobody realised it was present.

Yet Anya is by no means the only trained observer with eyes on Blakemere. In three years, by a single bold stroke, the Forestry Commission has turned the clock back two centuries, and specialists in many countries are watching eagerly to see how the great experiment evolves.

Ways to beat the wee biting beasts

They swarm in thousands and they want your blood. No, not vampires - Highland midges.

Daniel Butler is itching to tell you about them

"DON'T EAT bananas. Try sticking sprigs of bog myrtle behind your ears," advises the Scottish Tourist Board jokingly. They are referring to methods of repelling the midge - or to be precise, the Highland midge, *Culicoides impunctatus*. This is responsible for the tide of discomfort experienced by thousands of visitors to the west coast of Scotland each year. Loch Lomond even broadcasts a midge forecast (based mainly on weather conditions). This started as a joke, but has struck a chord.

Even so, entomologists plead that the problem should be put into perspective. For most of *C. impunctatus*'s life cycle, it is harmless, wintering as larvae in damp top-soil, living on decaying plant matter and emerging in early summer to feed on nectar. It is during its second breeding cycle that problems begin.

Although the males are vegetarian, females need blood to breed their eggs. They identify their prey by the heat and carbon dioxide given out by all mammals. Normally, this comes from horses, cattle and deer, but a midge intent on reproduction is not choosy. If a human being wanders into range at the appropriate point, it is a case of all donations being gratefully received.

The result is economically damaging to many areas of the western Highlands. It is almost

impossible to assess the full impact, but it is undoubtedly huge. Forestry workers are particularly badly affected because the insects fly through the day in the cool, damp shade beneath the trees. According to one estimate, at the height of the season midges can account for a 20 per cent cut in productivity, with logging gangs forced to stop work because of the nuisance.

Similarly, anglers trying to make the most of the early morning and evening clash badly with the time of peak midge activity.

"There are no hard figures, but there's a lot of anecdotal evidence," says George Hendry, author of *Midges of Scotland*. "My book becomes a best-seller every summer and, apparently, solicitors and estate agents tell people not to put big properties on the market during the midge season because it could put off rich American buyers."

"In fact, of the 150 biting midges and 300 non-biting species, just one is responsible for virtually all the problems. We should try to maintain some sort of perspective on any difficulties that may exist."

Midges shun bright, dry or windy conditions and are at their worst around dawn or dusk. Bites can be avoided by staying indoors during these critical periods. Even so, almost everyone visiting the affected regions (and these include most damp, vegetation-rich areas), will find themselves bothered at some point.

According to Fred Silver,

who works in the heart of midge country at The Stornoway Gazette, the best answer is stoicism: "I was brought up in Lancashire, where vast clouds of them used to wait at the garden gate. You just had to run through them and bear it," he

says. "Even up here, where they're really bad, the old peat-cutters used to swear by working through it all. 'Never scratch' was their answer."

More delicate souls may be tempted to rely on the pharmacist's shelf, but George Hendry says there are only two reasonably effective products licensed by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Neither is totally satisfactory, mainly because the powerful chemicals can be absorbed through the skin.

"There are plenty of herbal potions and elixirs that come out each year but these tend to be marketing gimmicks that disappear almost as soon as they arrive," he says.

"A couple of years ago some did produce a cream, based

on the natural repellent bog myrtle, but extracting this proved to be too expensive."

The only alternative is a semi-natural product, citronella, used for 60 years. But this has the drawback of turning skin yellow over time.

The voracious Highland midge, blood-sucking scourge of workers and tourists in some of Scotland's most beautiful and picturesque countryside

JL Mason/
Ardea London

So is there an effective midge cure in sight in the foreseeable future? Apparently not, according to Alison Blackwell. "Research into midges is underfunded," she sighs.

"Most of the basic work was done way back in the Forties, but then the money dried up. Of course, we're itching to build on it all."

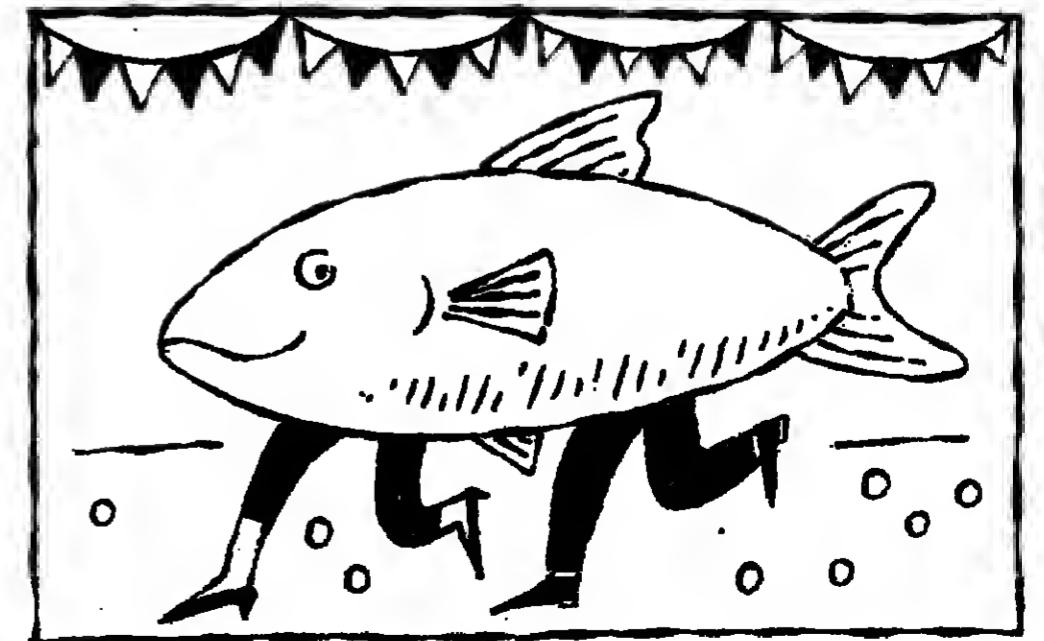
Midges of Scotland by George Hendry, is published by Merkat Press, price £4.95

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEKEND

MEET MISS Pearl and Master Mussel and flap your fins at the Fish Slappers' Dance at the Oyster Festival this weekend at Whitstable - the town that has been famous for its oysters since Roman times. The Sea Scouts will bring a ketchful of oysters to parade round the town before they are distributed to Whitstable's pubs, restaurants and cafés. On Thursday, there is a procession from St Peter's Church down to the sea, where a Blessing of the Waters ceremony takes place in honour of St James, patron saint of sailors.

The Whitstable Oyster Festival runs from 25 July to 2 August. The Landing of the Oysters parade and dance will be held on Saturday 25 July from 1pm. The Blessing of the Waters ceremony, Thursday 30 July at 7pm. More festival information is available on 01227 255666.

SALLY KINDBERG



Walking back to happiness

We neglect them, force them into tight spaces for hours at a time, put all our weight on them and still expect them to carry us around. No wonder our feet hurt. Rhiannon Batten thinks it is high time we took care of our tootsies



How can you put your best foot forward without a bit of tender loving care? Treat your feet to some serious therapy and in no time at all they'll look good enough to slip into the slinkiest of sandals

Nicola Kurtz

That moment when you come home with tired, red-hot feet and plunge them into cool water so that they almost sizzle is probably the closest many of us get to giving our feet any attention at all. The feet are one of the most neglected parts of the body so it is no wonder that many people cannot bear to look at their toes, let alone expose their feet to the world.

Looking after your feet will not only get them presentable enough to slip into the latest summer sandals, it may also improve your general well-being. The foot carries many sweat glands, and some believe that clearing any blockages may have beneficial effects on your whole body.

Falguna Raja, a senior chiropodist for Scholl, recommends that people see a chiropodist every six to 12 months, more often if necessary. "People do most damage to their feet by trying to carry out chiropody treatments themselves, by running around outside with bare feet and by neglecting to wash and thoroughly dry their feet every day," she says.

If you think it is time your feet had a check up, the Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists (0171-486 3381) can help you find your nearest state registered chiropodist.

Some take the theory that you are what your feet are even further, by using reflexology, a form of complementary medicine that treats the body by massaging the feet. Specific reflex points are said to correspond with specific parts of the body and massaging the feet is generally thought to be beneficial to sufferers of ailments such as stress and migraines. A treatment usually costs between £15 and £25 and lasts for an hour. For £1.50, the British Reflexology Association, at Monk's Orchard, Whitbourne, Worcestershire, WR6 5RB, will send you a list of registered reflexologists.

If you'd rather start with something less radical, a regular pedicure is the ideal way to keep your toes in shape. Elizabeth Terry of the US style magazine *In Style* says: "Good pedicures are so affordable in the States that people have them regularly, not just as a special treat, but as part of good grooming."

In Britain, however, a pedicure is seen as something of an extravagance, and it shows. Midge Killen, of Amazing Nails, has a pet hate for the bumpy, chipped toenails she sees on the Tube. "That same foot could look a million dollars with a

little care," she insists. According to Killen's customers, when you finish a good pedicure it is as if you have taken off a second shoe.

The OPI (0181-868 3400) keeps a list of registered pedicure salons throughout Britain but, if you would rather care for your feet in the privacy of your own home, there are several products worth trying. Scholl products are well known, but a clever recent addition is the new Fresh Step range, designed with odour-shy women in mind.

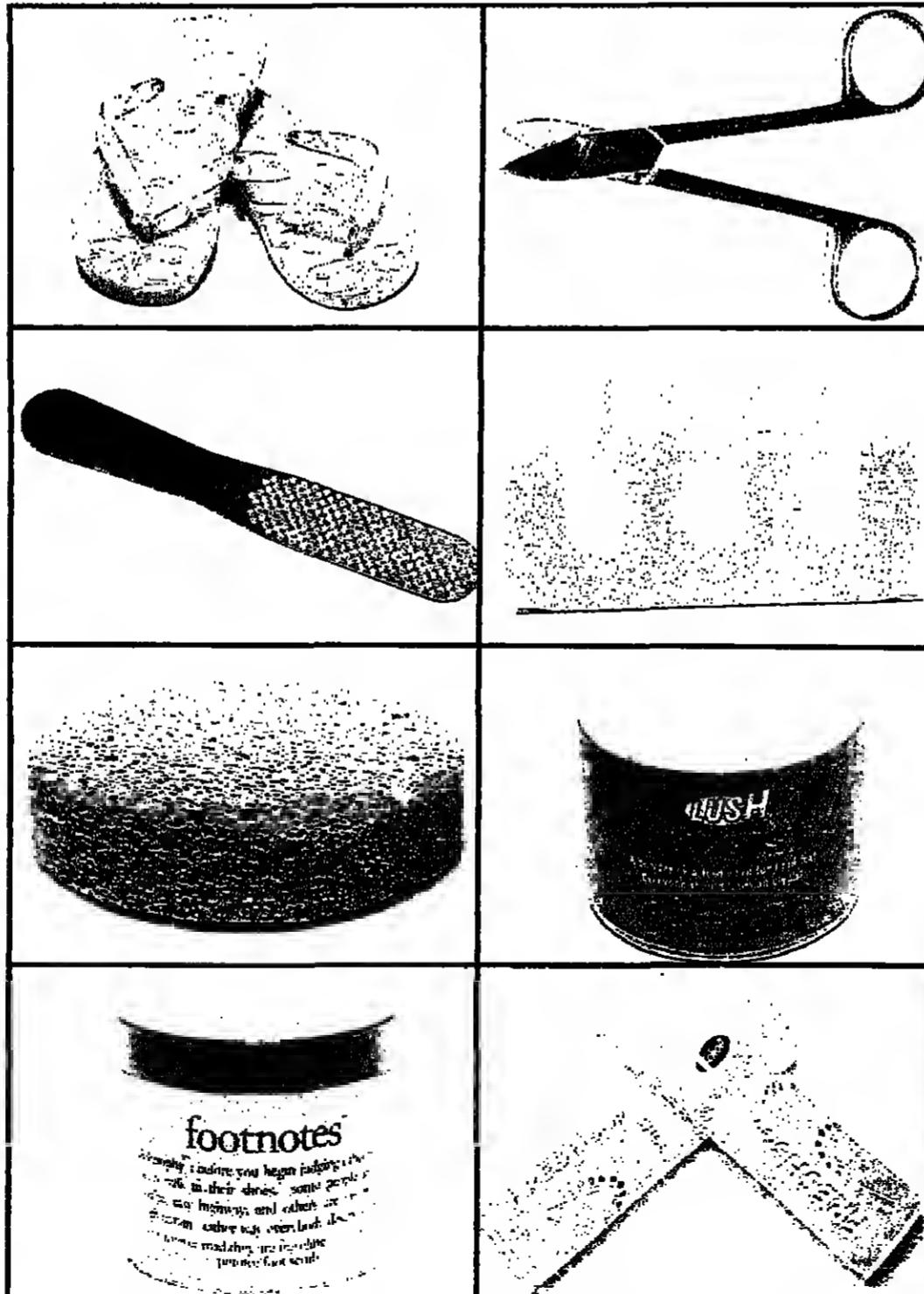
The tidiest of toes will also benefit from adding some Olygist powder to water and stepping into the cloudy, cassis-smelling foot-soak to cleanse, deodorise, soothe and relieve sore soles. It even doubles up as a foot talc for dry feet.

Or you could slip into Borghese's (01273 490085 for stockists) spa socks, available for £39.50 from August. These have a patented polymer lining that was originally used by medics to aid the healing process after hand surgery. Their skin hydrators, revitalisers and strengtheners are activated by body temperature, and the smell of the grapeseed oil, vitamin E, olive oil and jojoba oil is lovely. The feet will feel revitalised after 45 minutes but they can be worn overnight.

On a final note, it is reassuring to hear from Killen that even the best-dressed feet sometimes need a bit of TLC. Apparently, a certain style of expensive designer sandal has been causing many a fashionable foot to hobble down to her salon this summer in search of repair.

FOOT NOTES

1. Soak your feet for four to six minutes and then slough off dead skin with a foot file, three or four times a week.
2. Dry between the toes properly and use a powder.
3. Make sure your toenails are trimmed straight across to avoid ingrowing nails.
4. Apply a special foot moisturiser rather than a normal hand or body lotion.
5. If you suffer from smelly feet, avoid wearing damp shoes, use an anti-perspirant and choose cotton socks.



Clockwise from top left:
Flip-flops from Johnny Loves Rosie (0171-247 1496). At a special price of £7.95 to 'Independent' readers, including P&P.
Toenail scissors, £1.29, Superdrug (0181-684 7000)
Toe separators, 85p, Superdrug (0181-684 7000)
Olygist foot soak, £3.50/100g, Lush (mail order 01202 668545)

Fresh Step Foot Spray and Fresh Step Shoe Spray, both £2.75, Scholl (01582 443300 for stockists)
Philosophy footnotes pumice foot scrub, £11, Space NK (0171-299 4999)
Foot Steps pumice Stepping Stone, £2, Virgin Vie (0870 9099092)
Diamancel foot file, £2.50, Space NK (0171-299 4999)

Where to go to treat your feet

Here are some of the best places to get your feet into condition

A PEDICURE at The Urban Retreat at Harvey Nichols (London branch 0171-201 8610, Leeds 0113 2440212) involves immersing your feet in a special salts whirlpool. They are then moisturised, pumiced and old nail varnish is removed before cuticle cream is applied and the nails are trimmed, filed and varnished. A one-hour pedicure using Aveda products costs £30.

THERE ARE 60 Scholl Total Footcare Centres (call 01582 443300 for your nearest centre) nationwide and they exist as a health club for feet. Chiropody treatments, foot-care products, Scholl footwear and free foot examinations and shoe-fitting services are all available. A visit to a Scholl chiropodist consists of a foot bath, toenail trim, rough skin exfoliation, corn and callous removal and a relaxing massage to moisturise and tone the feet and lower legs. A session lasts around 30 minutes and costs from £20.

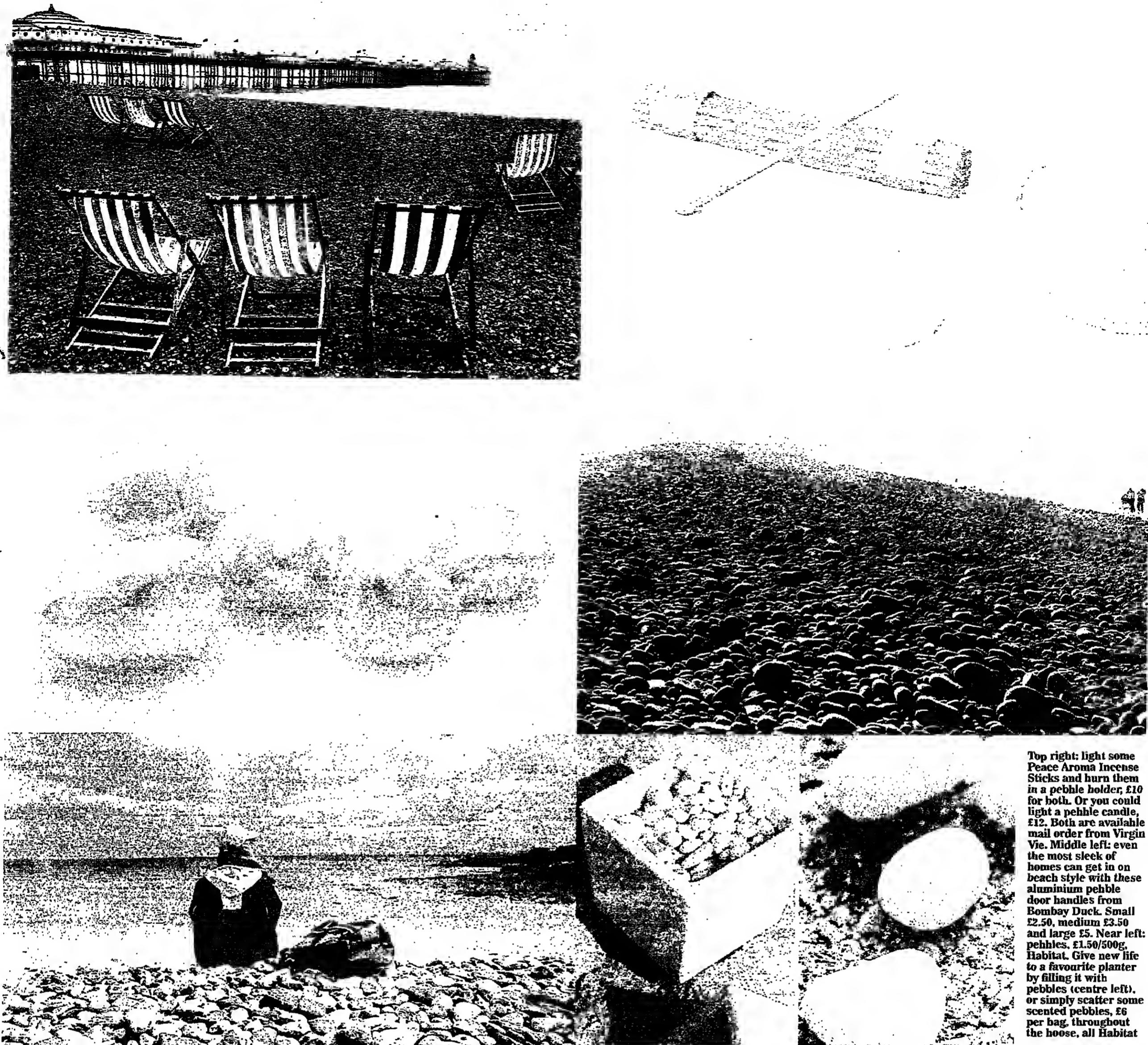
THE SANCTUARY Day Spa in Covent Garden (0171-420 5151), which is exclusively for women, has two foot treatments. The first is a luxury foot treatment which lasts for approximately 45 minutes and involves a foot spa, scrub, massage and paraffin wax heat treatment. It costs £25 for members and £30 for non-members. The reflexology treatment lasts for about an hour and costs £20 for members or £28 for non-members.

A VISIT to Le Grain de Beauté (0171-259 9560) is said to be like giving the body a holiday in the south of France and pedicures here have one of the best reputations in London. The £30

pedicure involves one and a quarter hours of foot spa, dead skin removal, scrubbing, cuticle tidyng, massage and painting. The deluxe pedicure takes about the same amount of time, costs £25 and includes having the feet softened in special warm boots.

THE GREEN Room (call 0171-927 6595 for the nearest salon) uses only Body Shop products (01903 731500 for the nearest stockists) and there are four foot treatments to choose from. The leg and foot refresher lasts 30 minutes and costs £19.50; the pedicure lasts 45 minutes and costs £20; the hand and foot massage lasts 15 minutes and costs £10; while the express pedicure lasts 15 minutes and costs £10.

AMAZING NAILS, at 21 South Molton Street, London (0171-355 3634), is run by Midge Killen who has pedicured Barbara Streisand's toes, no less. First the feet are checked to see whether you need a chiropody treatment with Gillian Michael of John Bell and Croydon (04325 144138). Afterwards, the feet are sprayed with a sterilising foot spray, then washed, dried, polished, exfoliated and oiled. A mask is put on the toenail to clean, sterilise, remove any discolouration and condition the nail before it is filed. Feet are exfoliated, scrubbed, cleansed, moisturised and revitalised and then the toenails are painted from a choice of 250 colours. The initial pedicure costs £30 and thereafter about £26.50. Amazing Nails sells a 'Feet To Go' mail order pedicure kit for £12.95 and single nail varnishes for £7.95, or a set of six which can be used together to create 60 different shades for £15.



Top right: light some Peace Aroma Incense Sticks and burn them in a pebble holder, £10 for both. Or you could light a pebble candle, £12. Both are available mail order from Virgin Vie. Middle left: even the most sleek of homes can get in on beach style with these aluminium pebble door handles from Bombay Duck. Small £2.50, medium £3.50 and large £5. Near left: pebbles, £1.50/500g, Habitat. Give new life to a favourite planter by filling it with pebbles (centre left), or simply scatter some scented pebbles, £6 per bag, throughout the house, all Habitat

Designers in pebble dash

Natural stone around the home is the latest fashion but there is no need to make a lengthy excursion to the beach. Just visit your local design store. By Karen Falconer

I love your pebbles - did you bring them back from Devon?" would not long ago have been perfect dinner party banter; but as stones big and small become the latest must-have accessory for the home and garden, it is as likely as not this summer to be met with a half-embarrassed chuckle: "Um, oh, in fact the little green ones are Habitat, the shiny brown ones are Conran Shop and I bought the rocks in Sainsbury's Homebase."

It's back to nature with a vengeance - and rocks are fast becoming as much a feature of the modern interior as slate-lined bathrooms and zinc work surfaces.

With post-modern irony, the wave of naturalism that is sweeping us to the millennium is being satisfied as much from the clean shelves of high-street retailers as from stone-hunting quests along Britain's coasts and hills. After all, digging even the most wondrous lump of stone along two kilometres of moorland is no easy feat - though it may turn out to look magnificent as a centre-piece on the dining-table.

That is one reason why Steven Einhorn - who sells by mail order from his eponymous design shop, and retails wholesale to the likes of Paul Smith and John Lewis - is doing so well.

Although he does produce special stone-based nail chairs on commission, this leader in the new Stone Age trend keeps mainly to easily manageable pieces. "Most people want something they can carry away with them," he points out, reasonably enough.

The interior of his shop on Is-

lington's Upper Street has a peaceful glow from candles flickering out of neat holes cut in smooth grey Cumbrian stones. These candles start at £16.45 and firestones cost from £37 each. Because of the very nature of stones, each purchase is different. Often people end up spending half an hour choosing the one they want.

"We get our rocks two or three times a year mainly from Bird Island, a nature sanctuary in Cumbria. They wash up on the beach, so they are quite varied. It's a renewable source, so we aren't ravaging the

countryside, but we select all the stones that comes here."

Elsewhere, rocks are popular in other guises. At the Conran Shop chiselled-out pink, as well as grey, rocks, costing from £10.50, make homes for flowers and candles; bowls display an array of polished Chinese pebbles, from £4.50, while plain-glass vases are half-filled with stones before being topped with illes or even a Spike light.

At Habitat, pebbles are sold in pale blue, white and black, while lava is used for shallow concrete bowls and planters.

"They are hand-carved from ancient Javanese lava stone," explains a spokeswoman. "It adds mystique."

Others take the pebble theme to its modern conclusion. Bombay Duck, for example, is producing aluminium pebble door handles, while Virgin Vie sells Swedish stones as candle holders and fragrance burners, and a synthetic option too: packets of porous, biscuit-fired clay pebbles with five different scents to perfume the room and names such as peace, cherish and glee.

"They're inspired by a natural

pebble found on the river bed smoothed by the wind, waves and hands of time," chants the in-store labelling.

Rocks and stones have long been regarded as almost sacred: pagan symbols of endurance and strength; the foundation and soul of the garden and house in Japanese philosophy. "Stones come from the beginning of time. They harbour the gods and some of the primal energy from earliest times," says Sarah Shurety, of the Feng Shui Company.

"I can understand some people thinking, 'I didn't buy my dishes of pebbles; mine are real!'" admits a Conran Shop spokeswoman. "They are pure, simple and natural. Part of that whole feeling of going back."

"On a table, without cluttering, they are all about the urban flow of life; anyway, it's almost impossible

to find enough of similarly tinted pebbles on the beach - even if you have the time. And, naturally, pebbles are good sellers.

In the stone league, connoisseurs will always prefer the personal find, imbued with the perfect memory: Devon pink for a craggy look; Lakeland green for chunky green slate; Chisel Beach for Portland stone; Norfolk for amber brought across from the Baltic; the Northumberland coast for jet; Lyme Regis for fossils - but it takes a long time to find a significant collection, particularly as more and more people start to look.

So while an exquisite stone from a shop will never hold the memories of the perfect boulder found on a hasty holiday stroll on top of the Sierra Nevada, or an unspoilt beach in the wilds of Scotland, with a little attention to geology you can still scupper the sniffs of the rock snobs with the tale of your own acquisitions ice Age journey across the North Sea many millions of years ago.

Steven Einhorn (0171-359 4977) is at 210 Upper Street, London

Phone 0645 334433 for your nearest Habitat store

The Conran Shop (0171 589 7401) is at 81 Fulham Road, London

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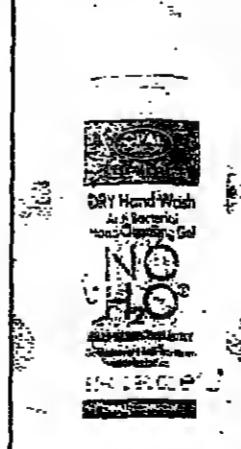
Virgin Vie has branches nationwide or phone 0870 9099092 for mail order

GOOD THING



Start the day on a sensible note and make sure you find your way into work with a mug or two - £4.99 each - of tea from an A-to-Z teapot, £19.99, from Brats (0171-351 7674 for mail order).

MAD THING



FOR FASTIDIOUS travellers, or anyone who is too lazy to find their way to a washbasin - or into a packet of wet wipes - a new product has arrived on the shelves to help you on your way. NO H2O is an essential item to keep in your pocket this summer because its special gel is formulated to clean hands without adding water. It costs £2.75, plus 75p p&p, from Opal London Limited (0181-208 0708 for mail order).

SHOP TALK



IMAGINE A cross between the shops at the Tate and London Zoo and you will have a good idea of the kind of things on sale at Fitch's Ark, actress Suzanne Pleshette's contemporary art gallery.

Current items for sale include a Helen Kaminski woman ceramic, £25; a glass penguin bowl by Julia Linstead, £35; and colourful elephant tableware by Kamjana Nicholas, from £22. The best thing is that a percentage from each sale goes towards the Born Free Foundation, which campaigns for the conservation of endangered species.

Fitch's Ark, 6 Clifton Road, Little Venice, London, W9 1SS (0171 266 0202)

TIM STEIN

Arcadia becomes a car park

Durlston Head in Dorset holds many mementoes of its Victorian guiding spirit, George Burt. By Anna Pavord

Swanage is a benign little south coast resort, at its zenith now, with holiday-makers thick on the fine sand beach, picnics laid out on tables in front of the neat rows of beach huts, and children in canoes capsizing shriekingly in the protected arm of the town's harbour. At the foot of humpy Ballard Down are the strange white rocks known as Old Harry and His Wife, landmarks for sailors along the stretch of coast. On the horizon lies the whale shape of the Isle of Wight.

Poking around Swanage is a pleasure at any time (a good second-hand bookshop, an excellent fishmonger with samphire for sale) but I had gone on a quest. It was prompted by an absorbing piece that David Lambert, conservation officer for the Garden History Society, had written in the latest edition of the *New Arcadian Journal*. Arcadia in Swanage? It seemed unlikely.

But one man, at least, saw the town as the centre of the known universe, a paradise on earth; and that was George Burt, the subject of one of Mr Lambert's essays. He was a quarryman, a stonemason, nephew of and heir to the great contractor John Mowlem, who, in the middle of the last century, remade vast tracts of London. Both were Swanage men, and both were hoarders. Before the term "architectural salvage" had even been invented, these two were stockpiling the bits and pieces of London that they were busy knocking down, and bringing them back home to decorate and aggrandise their home territory.

Once you get your eye in, you start seeing bits of Burtiana all over Swanage: stone Ionic columns brought from Regent Street, a clock tower from London Bridge, and (you can scarcely miss it) the astonishing front of Swanage's Town Hall, a superb 17th century extravaganza that originally decorated the Merchants' Hall in the City of London.

Before he retired from business, Burt built himself a grand mansion, Purbeck House, in the High Street. It is now a hotel. The handsome entrance came from Grosvenor Place (Mowlem's men were working at Hyde Park Corner in 1883). The house itself was faced with granite chippings left over from the steps of the Albert Memorial (another

Mowlem commission). Portland stone cornices and iron columns came from the firm's demolition of the old Billingsgate fish market, and the garden was decorated with statues from the Royal Exchange.

The garden is rivetingly interesting. Burt, a stone man, understood the importance of good, solid boundaries and created several high-walled enclosures behind the house. On one, you can still see the iron supports running along the top which would once have held panes of glass to keep rain off the peach trees underneath. Greenhouse makers, such as Robinsons of Winchester, advertised many such devices in their sumptuous catalogues of the 1880s.

There are landmark Irish yews, which once must have marked the junctions of paths within the garden, and a vast weeping ash, with branches trained on iron supports to rest on stone pillars arranged in a circle round the tree. Creeping in under the ash's branches, which now sweep to the ground, you enter a cool, circular room, meticulously cobbled with narrow pebbles brought up from the beach.

Hidden in a bower of evergreens is a little octagonal summerhouse with a scalloped lead roof. The front makes a rustic screen of interlocking branches and twigs; the back is boarded and painted in the pale, peeling hue that makes design magazines go weak at the knees. An enigmatic piece of paving, cobbled with the same narrow stones that sit under the ash tree, starts and stops in the grass. Someone started to haul it up and then got tired of the job. What a pity they did not leave it alone.

At the top of the garden, spanning Sunshine Walk, is a well camouflaged water tank joined to a second summerhouse on a mound, with an astonishing view out over the bay. Here, you get signs of another important side of George Burt. He was mad on inscriptions. He liked to leave his own marks, as well as those of other, earlier, craftsmen. Like Dickens's Mr Gradgrind, he also liked facts. He had a now unfashionable philanthropy, a desire to instruct the "operatives and humbler classes" for whom his uncle had built the Mowlem Institute in town. It had 2,000 hooks, as well as stuffed birds,

fossils and shells. An inscription on the water tank explains how it feeds a slate cistern beneath the summerhouse. It gives the precise dimensions of the tank and reveals that it holds "25 ton 13cwt (or) 960 cubic feet (or) 5,982 gallons" of water. A conversion table in the right-hand corner of the plaque shows how to do the sums.

If you leave Purbeck House, past the beautifully lettered "Beware of Dog: Chained Day, Loose Night", past Mr Burt's Stone Office on the quay, and take the steep road out of town to Durston Park, you find Burt at his most rhetorical. He had high hopes for Durston, once a wild area of stone workings and quarrymen's tracks. Having bought

a couple of hundred acres of the headland, he envisaged it as a kind of garden suburb (that phrase had not been invented, either) with villas set between lush plantings of exotic trees and shrubs.

A carriage drive would wind through the properties to the right, the house and the Tilly Whim Caves. The whole area was to be open to the public, of course, and provided a heaven-sent opportunity for Burtian inscriptions. Tennyson was invoked "An Iron Coast and Angry Waves...", so was Shakespeare, but after he had done the literary bit, Burt added his own characteristic postscripts: "Above Sea 149ft".

Quotations from Pope, Milton, Dryden and Wordsworth surround

one of the most famous of the Durston landmarks, Burt's great stone globe, balanced on the edge of the cliff. But alongside the poetic bits, Burt sets fancy-thought details: "The rate of the earth's motion at the equator is about 1,040 miles per hour". (He must have hated that "about".) "The common black swift flies at the rate of 200 miles per hour." The conjunction is bizarre. Here is an Ian Hamilton-Finlay before his time.

Not much remains of Burt's exotic plantings, though his tamarisk still thrives along the coast path and some fine pines rise out of the brambles. Occasionally you come across a surreal, but impious, carved hand pointing west:

"Carriage Drive To The Light-house". Bollards brought from Bloomsbury and the City of London guard the way up to the hefty fortress of Durston Castle, another Burt creation.

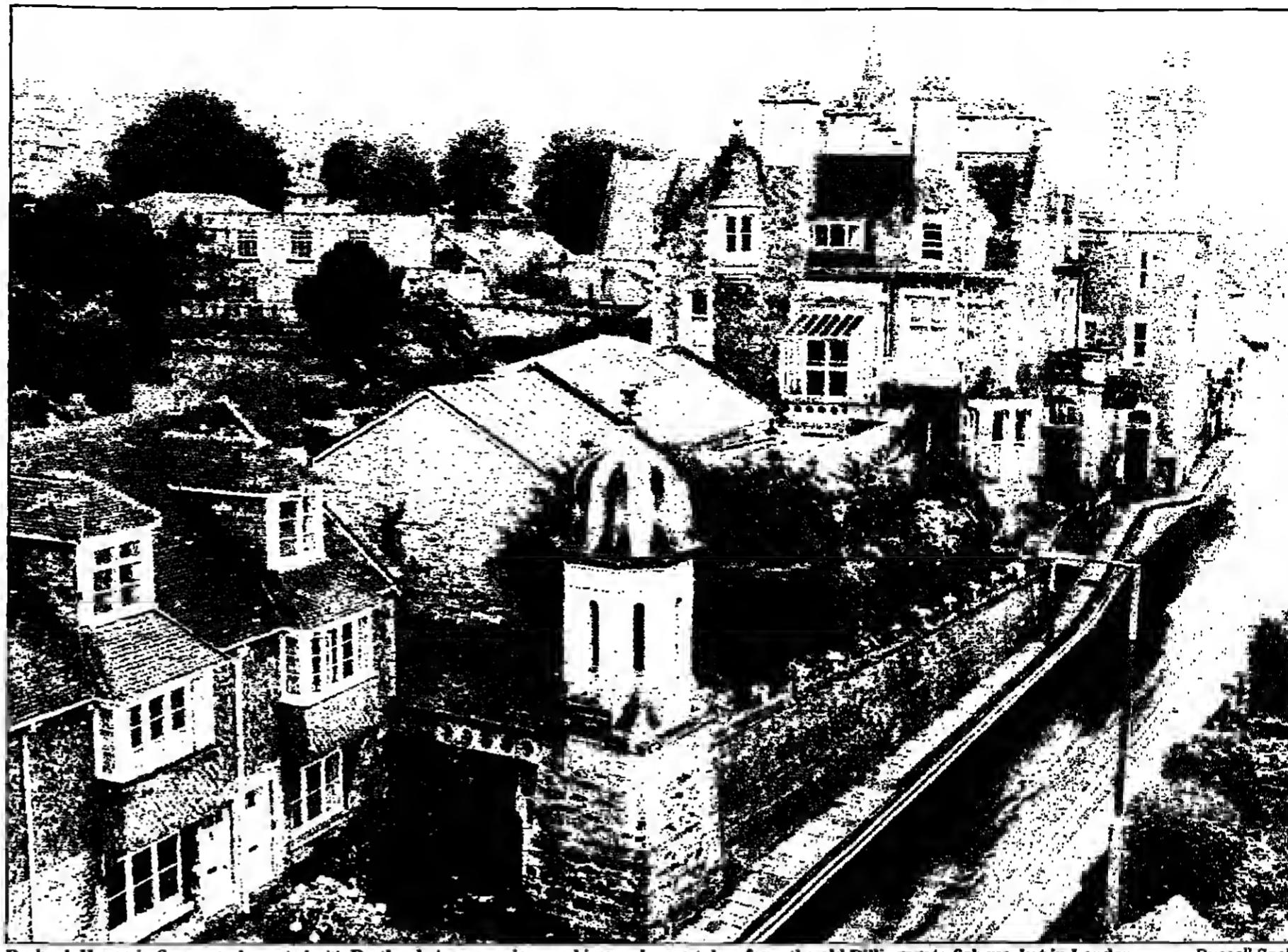
Durston is now a country park. Boards round the car park "interpret" the place for visitors: these are the birds you may see, here are the flowers you must not pick. Nowhere is there any mention of George Burt, of his dreams, his idealistic vision of a people's arcadia in Durston Head. Nowhere is there any information about Burt's curious artefacts, "redolent", as David Lambert writes "with the poetry of their own displacement".

At the Purbeck House Hotel, the

Planning Inspectorate has recently overturned the Purbeck District Council's own wishes and allowed the hotel's new owners permission to build a 15-bedroom annexe in the garden and an executive home behind the temple. A car park will take care of much of the rest of the walled garden. "What exactly is it that we are conserving?" asks Lambert, in two brilliantly argued essays in the *New Arcadian Journal*.

This is my last column for a while. I'm off to fight a different battle - against cancer. Wish me luck.

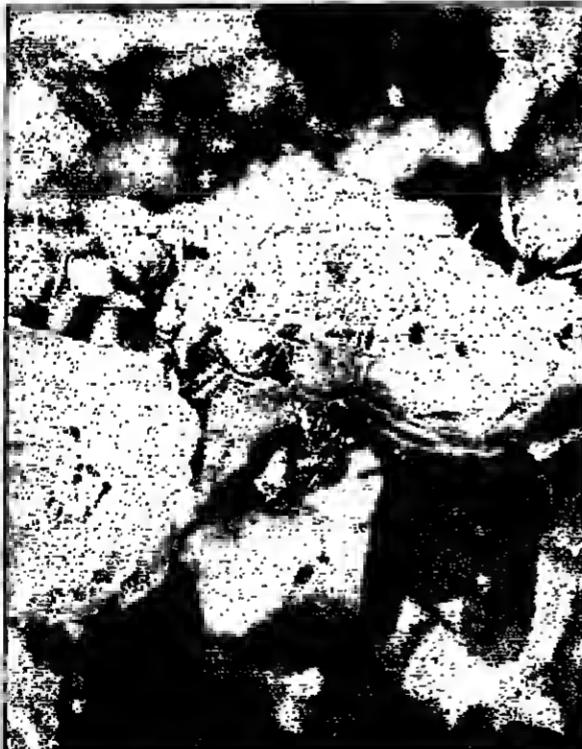
Order the *'New Arcadian Journal'* (subscription £20 a year) from Patrick Eyres, 13, Graham Grove, Leeds LS4 2NF (0113 304608)



Purbeck House in Swanage decorated with Portland stone cornices and iron columns taken from the old Billingsgate fish market in London

Russell Sach

WEEKEND WORK



New roots should have formed by September, when the layers can be separated from the parent plant.

Plant autumn-flowering bulbs such as colchicum and sternbergia as soon as you can get hold of them.

CUTTINGS

FUCHSIAS DO not like blazing sun, so have been remarkably untroubled by the cool overcast summer we've been having. Although they have never been hot favourites of mine (they smack too much of the boudoir and the powder puff) I saw them used brilliantly at a garden I was in last week. This was the National Trust's Tatton Park in Cheshire, where a great deal of effort and money has gone into

restoring the old conservatory and fern house. A small display house stands behind the conservatory, beautifully made up in the old-fashioned way with pots of flowering plants.

All along a raised bed in the centre of the showhouse stood standard plants of the fuchsia 'Checkerboard'. Its flowers hung like little pagodas, the whitish petals spreading wide over the central red

bell. Being naturally upright in growth, it is ideal used as a standard, and it was flowering fit to bust.

Fuchsias also decorate the short, glassed-over passage that leads from the showhouse to the conservatory. These too are grown in pots, the stems trained up the sides of the glass, then brought over the top of the passage just under the glass roof to meet in the centre. You walk under a ceiling of

hanging fuchsia flowers, the first time I have ever seen them used in this way. It was magic. The variety was the confusingly named 'White Spider'. It is in fact pale pink, with petals that curl back on themselves above the long, thin corolla. They are worth seeing. Tatton Park is open daily, except

Monday (10.30am-5pm); admission £2.80.

ANNA PAVORD

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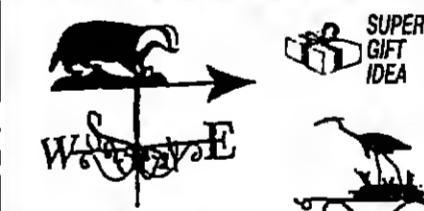
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Waves of destruction

It was a tsunami that caused chaos in Papua New Guinea last week, not a mere tidal wave

IT WAS not a tidal wave that cost more than a thousand lives and swept away entire villages in Papua New Guinea. There was nothing tidal about it. Tidal waves are, as their name suggests, caused by the tides, which are in turn caused by the gravitational pull of the moon as it orbits the earth.

High "spring" tides occur at new and full moon when the pulls of the sun and moon are in alignment; low "neap" tides happen when the moon is in its first and third quarters and is at right angles to the direction of the sun. When stormy conditions combine with naturally high tide, considerable waves can result. Those are the only true tidal waves.

When a vast wall of water is about to engulf you, however, you do not have time to stop and think about what caused it. And that may explain why the term "tidal wave" is so often used erroneously to describe the type of disaster that hit Papua New Guinea, which is properly known by the Japanese name of tsunami.

From the word *tsu*, harbour; and *nami*, waves, a tsunami is the result of an underwater earthquake, or even a volcanic eruption or mudslide at the seabed. As the ground gives way at the bottom of the ocean, a crack appears and fills with water, setting off a sequence of events of vast power. The displacement of huge quantities of water creates a massive wave that crosses the ocean at speeds greater than 1,000 kph, but at such a great depth that ships directly above it may feel nothing.

When the deep tsunami reaches shallower waters, its speed diminishes because of friction with the ground. The fast-moving tail section of the wave then catches up with its front, leading to a dramatic increase in the wave height, reaching crests of 50 metres or more that are capable of striking with devastating force.

The earliest recorded use in the Ox-



WILLIAM
HARTSTON

ford English Dictionary of the word "tsunami" comes from *Gleanings in Buddha-Fields* by L Hearn (1897) and gives a good account of the power and shock of such a wave as it reaches land: "Tsunami" shrieked the people; and then all shrieks and all sounds and all power to hear sounds were annihilated by a nameless shock... as the colossal swell smote the shore with a weight that sent a shudder through the hills".

The speed at which a tsunami travels allows little time to warn the local population of its approach. Last Friday's disaster happened only minutes after the earthquake that set it off, making it impossible to warn people in coastal villages, let alone evacuate them or provide any form of shelter.

According to Japanese researchers, it began with a magnitude-7 quake at the sea-bottom where the Pacific plate thrusts beneath the India-Australia plate. Papua New Guinea is on the Pacific Rim, where the "Ring of Fire" belt of volcanoes follows a line of weak spots in the earth's crust where the two plates meet. Earthquake waves monitored at seismological institutes around the world suggest that a huge vertical crack in the Pacific plate was the main cause of the wave that followed.

An early warning system for tsunamis



All that remained of one building in Papua New Guinea after the tsunami

Reuters

would depend on predicting the earthquakes that precede them. Curiously, since undersea earthquakes have only recently been monitored, in earlier times it was accounts of the wave forms of tsunamis that provided information of historical undersea earthquakes.

Records indicate that tsunamis have struck Papua New Guinea 16 times this century, though last week's seems to have been the worst at least since 1888. Its destructive power surprised even seasoned tsunami watchers. According to Kevin McCue, of the Australian Geo-

logical Survey Organisation, scientists did not expect anything so bad when they recorded the earthquake, itself.

"The sea-floor topography there must have been just right for the wave to come in and not spread out, but be focused right there on to that area," he explained.

"The villagers could not have been in a worse spot." There had also been no evidence of the increased seismic activity that might have allowed the earthquake to be predicted.

"You do not have a tsunami like this every year," Steven Jaume, from the Ad-

vanced Centre for Earthquake Studies, told Reuters. "But I can think of several destructive tsunamis in the last decade," he added, citing incidents in Indonesia in 1994, in Nicaragua in 1992 and in Japan in 1991 and 1993. "This is not an unusual year," he said. "This is, unfortunately, normal."

The most infamous tsunami of all was in 1833, when the eruption of Krakatoa created a wave that killed 36,000 in Sumatra, but even that was not as bad as the wave that destroyed Lisbon in 1755. That killed 60,000.

PANDORA MELLY

GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

Bruno Schrecker, 69, retiring cellist of the Allegri Quartet

WHEN we came to England, I used to do the whipping tops, and I was very good at dabs - you know, jacks, where you pick up the little stones. Amongst ourselves as a family, we used to have toy theatres and glove puppets: Kasper is Mr Punch in German. My mother used to make these things.

I have two brothers, and the middle one of us is a very schoolmasterly sort of person. When he was aged about seven, he used to dominate me, he would make up the stories, and I would be the puppeteer. What were the stories? Oh God, my memory is absolutely awful, I really don't remember. But we did do one proper performance.

We were all evacuated during the war to a place called Kelly House near Tavistock. It was a sort of stately home set up. They were very poverty-stricken aristocracy, and it was one of those absolutely on-going house-parties. The soldiers, the airmen, the Australians, the Canadians; all sorts of funny characters used to turn up. And the owners would entertain them. They had no money at all; they had a servant, but they were completely penniless.

What I'm leading up to is that the youngest son got married and we put on a puppet show for them at their wedding. That was quite something. I remember it now. It was based on the story of Lohengrin, a sort of bastardised version of the Wagner opera, with the swan coming on and stuff like that. I don't actually remember what the story was, but it had some deep significance.

My opera of German opera is limited. My father was a great opera fan. But I never was, which was my form of rebellion. All I know is that he rides off on a swan, Lohengrin does.

Bruno Schrecker's photographs of musicians spanning over 30 years will form part of an exhibition at the Peetham Galleria in Fulham, opening on 15 October. (Details: 0171-381-5358). His Canadian swan-song with the Allegri can be heard at The Festival of Sound, Georgian Bay, Ontario, for one week, closing 9 August.

News of the weird - what Santa does in summer

... and other stories of the past week that missed the headlines. By William Hartston

HOME NEWS

Blackpool

Richard Rodriguez, who last week broke the world record for riding on a roller-coaster, finally got off the Big Dipper at Blackpool Pleasure Beach after another 10 days' riding to ensure that he was not overtaken by a Canadian rival. He agreed to end his ride only after the news arrived that Normand St Pierre had ended his 30-day ride on Le Monstre ride in Montreal. After 32 days on the Big Dipper, Mr Rodriguez said: "I am feeling so excited, happy and overjoyed, it's almost impossible to explain."

Queueing

According to research by Audience Selection, the average Briton wastes

seven hours and 24 minutes a week waiting in queues and traffic jams.

Young people aged 15-25 lose twice as much time as over-65s, but the Welsh waste the most time of all. Londoners lose an average of two hours a week owing to heavy traffic.

FOREIGN NEWS

Italy

The Italian beach workers' union has called a strike on 31 July when it is hoping to enforce a total shutdown of beach umbrellas. The protest is against a proposed tourism bill which, it says, ignores the rights of beach workers.

Denmark

Around 80 Santa Clauses from 10 countries attended the 35th annual World Congress for Father Christ-

mases in Copenhagen. "A lot of children ask for peace," a Canadian Santa commented, adding that children's wishes showed there was hope for the world. "Once two years passed in a row without anybody asking for a toy gun," he said.

San Francisco

The 17th annual Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest for composing bad opening sentences to imaginary novels has been won Bob Perry, a corporate lawyer. His entry ran:

"The corpse exuded the irresistible aroma of a piquant ancho chili glaze enticingly enhanced with a hint of fresh cilantro as it lay before him, coyly garnished by a garland of variegated radicchio and caramelised onions, and impishly drizzled with glistening rivulets of vintage balsamic vinegar and roast-

ed garlic oil; yes, as he surveyed the body of the slain food critic slumped on the floor of the cozy (sic), but nearly empty bistro, a quick inventory of his senses told corpulent Inspector Moreau that this was, in all likelihood, an inside job."

The contest is named in dishonour of Edward George Bulwer-Lytton, a 19th century novelist whose book *Paul Clifford* begins: "It was a dark and stormy night."

SEX

Iran

A court in Tehran indicated that it will soon free on bail a German who is on trial for having sex with a local woman. The court said it would view "in a positive light" the man's plea that he had converted to Islam before he had sex with the woman. At

an earlier trial before that fact had come to light, he had been sentenced to death.

Los Angeles

Two alleged 18-year-olds who had indicated that they would lose their virginity on the Internet with the world watching have admitted that their names are not Mike and Diane as claimed: they are not 18, they are not virgins, and they had no plans to have sex together. But they said that their motives were pure.

Toronto

Terri-Jean Bedford, also known as Madame de Sade, opened her defence on charges of offering sex for money by claiming that she was offering no more than escapist re-creation. "If I put you on a roller-coaster blindfolded and naked,

you'd get the same pleasure," she told journalists who were reporting the trial.

MARRIAGE

Santa Fe

"I knew something was up, but not murder," Robert Sumster told a New Mexico television station after police informed him that his wife had offered an undercover agent \$750 to have him killed. Sumster said that his marriage had been through some rough times and said that his suspicions had been aroused when his wife started treating him well and fixing him dinner.

Germany

"There are considerable questions about designating the basket of a hot-air balloon as an official state

office," a spokesman for the registry at northern Brandenburg state explained, after his office had removed permission for Germany's first wedding in a hot-air balloon to take place.

CRIME

Dubai

Brigadier Abbas Ali, the chief of Dubai's prison service, announced that inmates serving sentences for fraud or other financial crimes will soon be able to run their businesses from their cells, with the back-up of secretarial services and a state-of-the-art business centre. He told Reuters there was no reason that a businessman serving a prison sentence should be cut off from his legal business and run the risk of incurring financial losses.

CHESS: WILLIAM HARTSTON

IN THE great days of the Soviet chess empire, the place to look if you wanted to find the most exhilarating new ideas was in the bulletins of the semi-finals of the USSR championships. While the finals contained games of the highest class among many of the world's best players, the semi-finals produced uninhibited battles among well-trained and hungry masters and grandmasters desperately trying to accumulate the huge scores needed to qualify for places in the final.

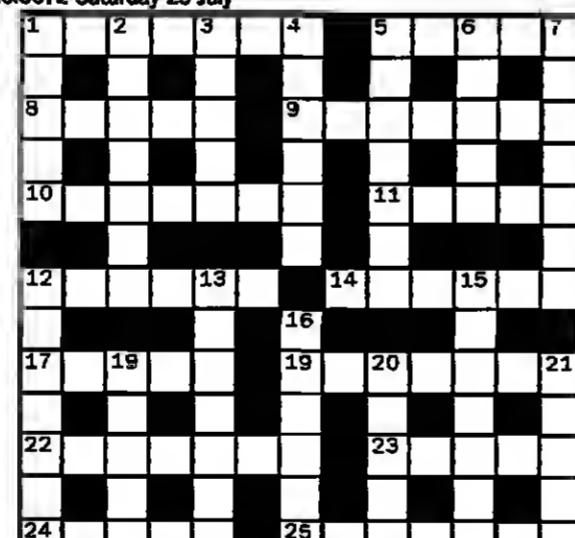
Through this system a string of unknown Russians emerged to win tournaments in the West. With their tactical skills and competitive edge honed on the bloodthirsty competition of Soviet championship preliminaries, they had no trouble with the refined caution and technique of Western grandmasters.

As the Soviet Empire declined and fell, however, the chess organisation stuttered. Teams from the ex-Soviet republics did well in the Chess Olympics, as they continued to demonstrate their old made-in-the-USSR skills, but the structure that produced them seemed to be crumbling. There were no more proper all-star Russian championships, and no more semi-finals.

As usual, however, predictions of a crumbling of Russian dominance are already looking over-optimistic, for out of the ashes of the old Soviet chess empire new structures are emerging, just as competitive and just as full of talent and ideas as be-

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- 11 Perfect (5)
- 12 Eerie (6)
- 14 Marksman firing from cover (6)
- 17 Rare gas (5)
- 19 Fatty (7)
- 21 Nxe6 Rhg8
- 24 Qd6 22 Nxd8 Bxg2+ 20 Drive (5)
- 25 Akin (7)

DOWN

- 1 Board game (5)
- 2 Stringed instrument (7)
- 3 Theme (5)
- 4 Annual (6)
- 5 Style (7)
- 6 Speak in public (5)
- 7 Of the stars (7)
- 12 Slaughter (7)
- 13 Cure-all (7)
- 15 Manufactured item (7)
- 16 Barrister or solicitor (6)
- 18 Gave people a hand? (5)
- 20 Drive (5)
- 21 Make alterations to (5)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

ACROSS: 1 Lise, 4 Tenors (Listeners), 9 Transit, 10 Under, 11 Leek, 12 Charter, 13 Elk, 14 Roof, 16 Lard, 18 Toe, 20 Unlure, 21 Free, 24 Khaki, 25 Macabre, 26 Reefer, 27 Baton. DOWN: 1 Little, 2 Strike, 3 Test, 5 Educable, 6 Oldster, 7 Shears, 8 Stack, 13 Effusive, 15 Outrage, 17 Bunker, 18 Theme, 19 Demure, 22 Rebut, 23 Scar.

BRIDGE: ALAN HIRON

Game all; dealer West

North
♦K Q 10 9 7

♦A Q 9 2
♦A 5
♦Q 2

West
♦4 5
♦K 3
♦K Q J 4
♦A K J 8 6 3

East
♦8 6 4 3 2
♦J 5
♦10 8 6
♦10 7 5

South
♦A J
♦10 8 7 6 4
♦9 7 3 2
♦9 4

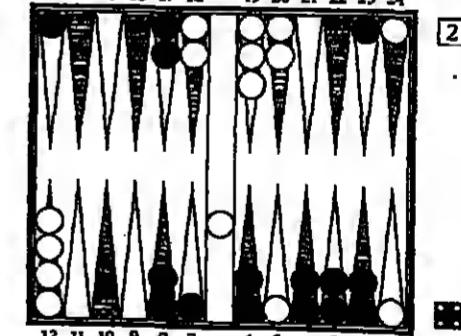
A NEAT false card steered declarer in the wrong direction on this deal, but it would not have succeeded if South had been able to count up to 13! At least, that was dummy's not unfriendly comment at the end.

West opened One Club and North decided to double, risking an unwelcome diamond jump from his partner; rather than simply overcalling. This worked well for, after a pass by East, South responded One Heart. West reversed with Two Diamonds and North (stretching a little) raised his partner to Three Hearts. Not to be outdone in optimism, South bid one for the road and West led ♦A

As you can see, the favourable trump position should have meant an easy 11 tricks, but it did not work out like that. West cashed a second top club and switched to ♦K. Declarer won on the table, came to hand with ♦A, and finessed ♦Q successfully. So far, so good, but under ♦Q East dropped his jack. It seemed clear to South that West still held ♦K and, in an attempt to pick up the king, he tried re-entering his hand with ♦J. No joy, for West was able to ruff this with his now bare king and cash a diamond for the setting trick.

So what had counting up to 13 got to do with it? Well, West's bidding had shown at least five clubs and four diamonds. If, as South expected, he held three hearts as well, then he held only a singleton spade and the attempt to come back to hand with ♦J was doomed to failure. If you think about it, the only real chance lay in finding out that East was sufficiently crafty to have dropped ♦J from a doubleton on the first round of trumps.

BACKGAMMON: CHRIS BRAY

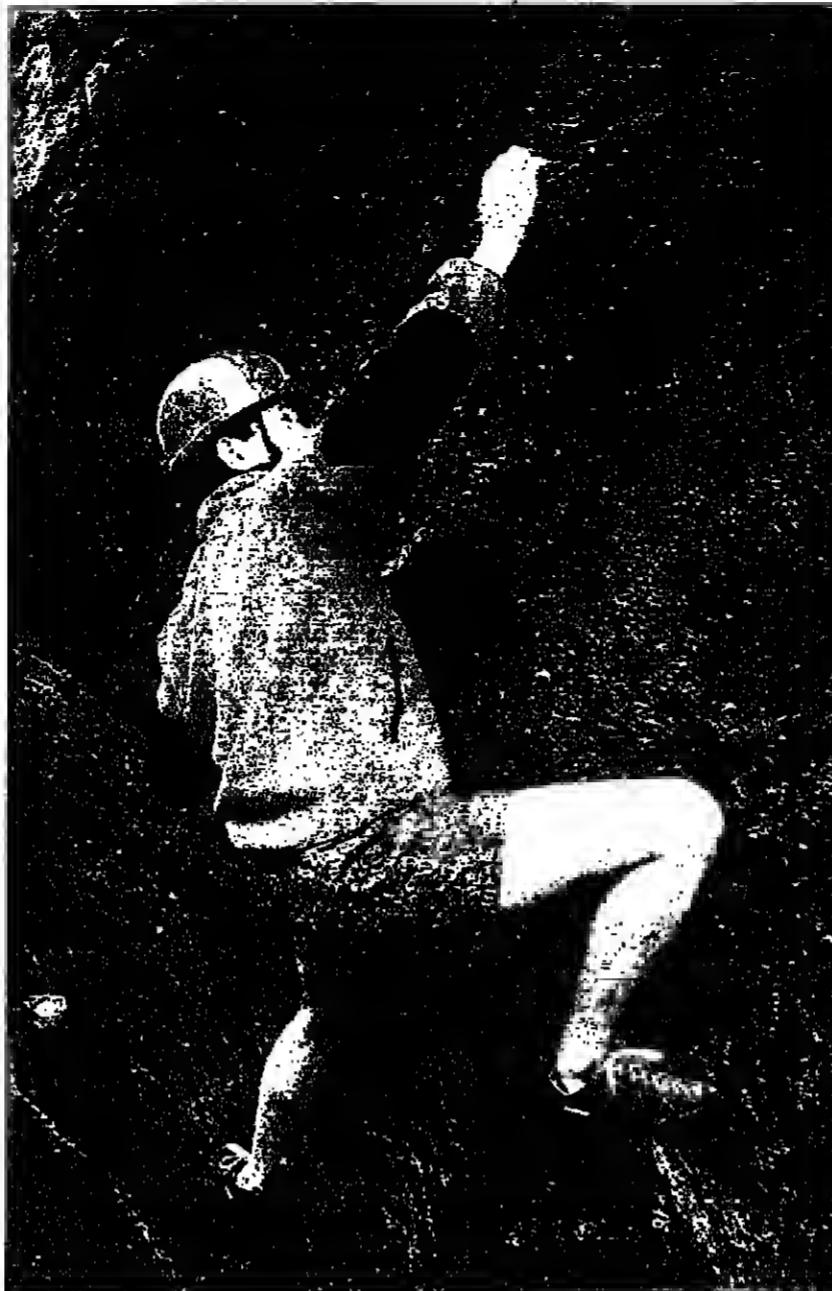


THE BLITZ is one of the easiest types of backgammon to play. You catch your opponent without an anchor in your home board and mercilessly attack him until one of two things happens. Either you will close him out and he will be left with two or three men on the bar, hopelessly watching as you bring home the remainder of your men, bear off and win a gammon. Or he will finally create an anchor in your board and then probably become the favourite, as your position is apt to be weakened by having attempted the blitz.

Computers are good at playing blitzes and human technique has improved by studying their play. In the early stages of a blitz it is important to have at least two of your opponent's men on the bar at each turn.

However, as your board gets stronger you have to balance hitting more men with making your board. For example, if you have the choice between hitting another man and making a fifth point in your home board it is nearly always correct to make the point. In the position above, taken from a low stakes chouette, the team were playing Black and had just rolled 43. How should they continue the blitz? Most

Bouldering is the perfect low-level introduction to the essence of rock climbing. By Eric Kendall



Penny Kendall

Fluent climbers make bouldering look like a slow-motion vertical ballet but, for beginners, hanging on for dear life is nearer the mark

Climbing for vertigo sufferers

Taut against the rock, wanting to merge with it, smeared across its cold surface, you search for another hold. Your grip - only tenuous to start - starts to slip with your ebbing strength. "Will you won't you fall?" becomes a simple matter of "When will you fall?" And there is no rope, no safety net, no comforting web of harness and hardware. First is heart-pounding, then simply heart-stopping when strength or still finally fails, and you plunge earthwards.

You hit the ground with a soft, rather than a sickening, thud. Well, it was only 18ft below you. But it makes little difference until the last moment; while you are up there, you tight every inch of the way to stay on. Besides, within the last 10 minutes you had momentarily reached

the giddy height of about 3ft 6in above sea level. This is life on the edge, just not a very high one.

But that is fine because when bouldering, height is all but irrelevant. This is not beginner's stuff; it is everybody's stuff: the perfect training ground for all climbers. For some purists, it is the ultimate challenge. At first glance it can be hard to see why, but this is the most "inner" form of climbing that exists, the chance to tackle and possibly solve a series of rock conundrums and find out a lot about your abilities. From the moment you scan a broad slab of rock, looking hard just to spot a hold to help you on board, it is utterly absorbing. The next move (and at a higher mental level, one or more after that) is all that matters; chess springs to mind as a comparison, though it rarely takes place upside down, nor do you normally dust your

fingers with chalk for extra grip before making a move. Safety issues, so central to climbing and mountaineering, are taken care of by never going high enough to present a serious risk, or by bailing someone below; "spotting", with bands outstretched to catch and steady you or at least to break your fall. The pay-off in terms of freedom and the opportunity to push to the limit and beyond can bring your climbing technique and confidence on by leaps and bounds. But despite the built-in security it can still feel as desperate as the moment, high up on a roped climb, when you know you are going to lose it despite pushing finger tips, tendons and muscles way beyond pain to try to hang in there. It is just these moments that bouldering imitates relentlessly, training the mind as much as the body to stay on an even keel.

Fluent climbers make bouldering look like a slow-motion vertical ballet, with rhythmic, repetitive build-ups to a move, practising contorted manoeuvres and turning them into smooth, natural actions, switching feet on tiny ledges, swapping hand-holds, and using momentary up-weighting to transfer body position. Easier ground can be covered at higher speeds to develop sinuous, supple movement; instead of gaining height, you can just go sideways. Overhangs - the hardest climbing problem - are still hard even when they are in the tight space between the ground and the gently curving underside of a large boulder. Fear of falling may well be substituted by the less realistic but even more terrible thought of being crushed as your weight pulls several tons of finely balanced granite on top of you.

When you watch experts at play,

it looks like a game that defies the laws of physics and biology. The shakes, tremors, pain, and exhaustion followed by total physical relief that flow through you as you jump off or fall, do not seem to be suffered by gnarly rock athletes who restore vice-like power to their fingers with a characteristic waggle of the lower arms as if shaking off water. Their minds, too, would appear to be differently developed from most, with the ability to visualise intricate aspects of an apparently blank piece of rock, even when they are nowhere near it; if it defeated them last time and possibly 100 times before that, then at least they know their enemy and may one day prevail.

For the rest of us, this is definitely the way to get our climbing off the ground, remembering that those physical inches on the rock face are mental milestones.

Where to boulder: If there is one thing that can put you off climbing more than vertigo, it is an aversion to tying knots and fiddling about with safety gear. Non-sailing, non-scouting types can find the pressure of yet another mind-bogglingly dexterous rope trick far harder to deal with than the real issue at hand - inching up vertical rock - and getting up into high mountains is not on everyone's wish list, either. Bouldering is the ideal antidote to all this, and a perfect introduction to the essence of climbing.

Natural bouldering opportunities tend to be near the valley floor in established climbing regions. Climbing walls often have specific areas for unroped climbing, usually with crash mats below. Much of Britain's coastline also has a lot of usable rock when the tide is right. Contact Jim Thompson on 01271 322955 to

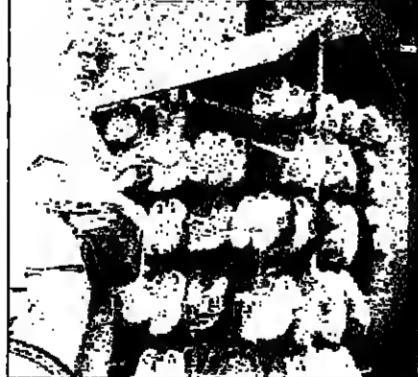
arrange instruction on the north Devon coast. Further afield, Fontainebleau, near Paris, has unrivalled sandstone boulders.

Though it is an instinctive activity, with no real safety issues to worry about, getting advice from experienced climbers on technique, as well as where to go, is invaluable. Try local climbing clubs or instructors. About 200 artificial climbing-walls are listed in the British Mountaineering Council's *Climbing Wall Directory* which costs £2.50 but is free to members. Write to the BMC, 177-179 Burton Road, Manchester M20 2BB, enclosing an s.a.e for membership information. Touching Stone is a climbing course for transferring skills from climbing wall to crag, and it includes some bouldering. Contact Pias y Brenin, the National Mountain Centre on 01690 720214, web site www.pyb.co.uk for details.

DON'T MISS TOMORROW'S...

INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

TRAVEL



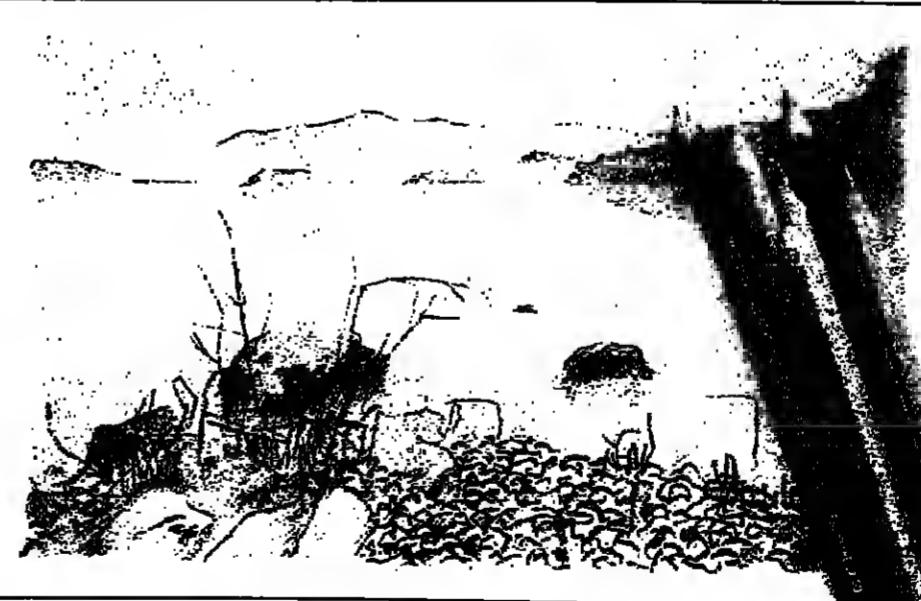
SUMMER IN THE NETHERLANDS

Take a short break in The Hague, city with a beach, or go for a muddy walk across the Wadden sea

YOUR PRACTICAL GUIDE TO HOLIDAYS

The strange draw of pencils

Would-be artist Jon Winter found himself unexpectedly riveted by a Lakeland museum



DEWY GRASS. May green 43. Varnished wooden hulls, golden brown 53. The subtle blush of morning sun on water pink 17...

Spend a few days sketching in the Lake District and you begin to see the world differently. In an effort to recreate the living landscape on a blank page, you reduce it to a pattern of light and shade rendered with the range of colours in your pencil case.

The effect of this new vision is extraordinary: suddenly everything becomes fascinating, no matter how unremarkable. A dead fern (somewhere between terracotta 64 and spectrum orange 11) against the dark, soggy mulch of a forest floor seems a worthy subject; the subtle green and blue hues and dimly textured of the stones at the edge of a lake merit closer scrutiny.

With so much subject matter in such picturesque surroundings it is difficult to know where to begin. So, before you put pencil to paper, it is worth paying a quick visit to the Cumberland Pencil Museum in Keswick.

A museum dedicated to the finer points of pencil production may not sound riveting, but there are other reasons to visit. Budding artists will find the video demonstrating drawing technique invaluable.

And there is the museum shop where you can equip yourself with everything you need for a day's sketching, from a humble HB to a full set of 120 coloured pencils in a presentation case.

About 450 years ago artists had less choice. Graphite, the raw material at the core of a pencil, had recently been dis-

covered at a mine in Borrowdale, near Keswick. Most of it went into producing cannon balls, but a cottage industry flourished, sticking the leftover scraps into grooved pieces of wood. So good were the drawing qualities of Borrowdale graphite that, by 1580, pupils at the school of the late Michelangelo were using pencils made in Cumberland bought from Flemish traders.

From then on the story of the pencil is a straightforward tale of good business, leading to the formation of the Cumberland Pencil Company in 1832 and on to modern-day manufacture capable of producing 2 million pencils a week.

Manufacturing techniques

have advanced but the method has hardly changed. They still insert graphite into a grooved piece of wood, only now the graphite comes mainly from the Far East and is mixed in precise ratios with wax, clay and glue to create 20 subtle drawing characteristics, from the fine, scratchy 9H to the soft and smudgy 9B.

I walked out of the museum clutching a starter pack of 12 coloured pencils, an A4 sketch pad and an assortment of individual colours carefully matched to those I had seen in the surrounding landscape.

After a 10-minute walk I was looking across Derwent Water from the slipway at the end of Lake Road. The view had the

potential - a cluster of upturned rowing boats in the foreground, mist draped around a tree-covered island in the lake, and the soft shapes of mountains forming the horizon line.

In fact, whichever way I looked there seemed to be a picture waiting to be drawn. So I set off round the edge of the lake to look at other possibilities, stopping every so often to make a quick study of a detail that caught my eye. Flakes of lichen, turquoise blue 39, growing on a fallen branch; the diagonal, hatched texture of a slate wall.

There are many creative devices to help you translate what you see on to paper. You can use just colour as a means of giving

form and shape to a subject, apply a purely linear method, or use loose patterns of dots, strokes or cross-hatching to create the illusion. Even the way you sharpen and bold a pencil can further add to your artistic vocabulary.

About half-way round the lake I settled on a classic landscape scene looking out from a small peninsula that vanished into a near-perfect reflection of a pale sky hemmed in by rolling hills. I began with a few quick sketches, trying out colour mixes and hatching techniques, but then every time I started on a more detailed study the drawing became laboured and fussy, losing the spontaneity of the earlier sketches.

As the day wore on and my pencils wore down, I did not notice the light gradually fading. After turning to yet another clean page I looked back at the scene and realised that the colours had changed to a palette of cool blues. The sky had filled in and where there had been copper beech 61 and olive green 51 in the hillsides, now there were hazy shades of blue, a dark violet and a French grey. I started again.

What turned out to be my best effort of the day (see picture) had to be finished off from memory after the light had finally faded, leaving me to wander back into Keswick under the night sky - which, if you are sketching in the Lake District, is somewhere between indigo 36 and ivory black 67.

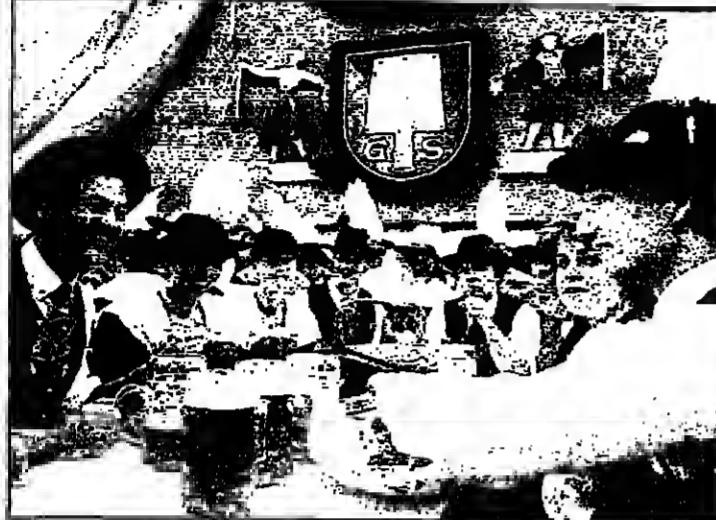
The Cumberland Pencil Museum, Keswick (017687 73526), open all year round 9.30am-4pm. Admission: adults £2, children £1, family ticket £4.50

الآن من الأفضل

Germany's wurst hangover

When it comes to the more earthly delights, the enormous scale of Munich's Oktoberfest overwhelms the senses.

Richard Warren reports



The statistics are awesome. Six million litres of beer; 400,000 pork sausages; 600,000 grilled chickens; 24 roasted oxen. These figures illustrate the conspicuous consumption of the five million debauchees who visit the Munich Oktoberfest each year. Even more telling are the statistics that show what happens once these hiratzwurst mountains and beer lakes have been consumed.

The Oktoberfest has its roots in the celebration of the marriage of Crown Prince Ludwig (later Ludwig I) of Bavaria to Princess Therese von Sachsen-Hildburghausen in 1810. So delighted were the people of Munich with the party that they decided to hold one every year. Despite its name, most of the festival takes place in September, ending on the first weekend of October. So now is the time to start planning a visit to this great beer fest.

At last year's Oktoberfest, 1,800 sets of keys, one dog, one wife, several sets of false teeth, one insulin injection kit and a pair of trousers with 15,000 German marks stashed in the back pocket were lost by drunken revellers at this, the biggest beer and folk festival in the world. Four people work full time throughout the 16-day event in the lost property office storing, labelling and handing back coats, wallets, bats, jumpers, scarves, gloves, cameras, rucksacks, passports, bags and mobile phones to their owners.

The lost property office was also a good place to find some clues about what types of people go to Oktoberfest. Dressed in lederhosen, like

many of his fellow Bavarians at the festival, Mr Deichstatter, volunteer manager of the lost property office for the past 15 years, has a few telling words about some of the foreign visitors. Although the Germans are the biggest festival goers, they are by no means the worst for losing their belongings. "The Australians and the New Zealanders are the worst when they are drunk. The Italians are the worst when they are sober," he says.

The Antipodeans have built up a distinctive reputation. They descend in thousands on the Hofbräuhaus-Festhalle, one of seven huge brewer tents that are the event's focus. In 1997, there were 14 beer, food and wine tents on the 31-hectare site.

Like the other tents, the Hofbräuhaus-Festhalle has a capacity of up to 10,000 people who can sit at wood-and-trestle tables and benches



Getting down to some serious drinking in full costume, left, while a Bavarian compah band, above, jollies everyone along

Pierre Adenis/Rex Features

'The Australians and the New Zealanders are the worst when they are drunk. The Italians are the worst when they are sober'

found both inside and outside the tent. From a stage in the centre, a Bavarian compah band, with all the musicians dressed in lederhosen, jollied everyone along in alcoholic oblivion by playing local folk favourites and international hits.

Festival organisers call the Hofbräuhaus Festhalle the "problem tent". It is not just the singing, the shouting, the sweating and the vomiting that astonish the Munich locals:

the fighting and the public sex grab their attention as well. Elsewhere, the festival is less riotous, though equally drunken. I spent a night at the Schottenhamel-Festhalle where the crowd was overwhelmingly German, mostly young, and at least one-third female.

The atmosphere here, as in the other tents, was more relaxed compared to the riot of the Hofbräuhaus

dinner plates and grilled chicken, drank beer with middle-aged New Yorkers; and took countless photographs in beer focus. I clinked steins with an endless stream of people I have never met before - and would never meet again - as if they were long-lost friends. I bought red roses from an under-dressed flower seller, and handed them straight back in the mindless spirit of amorous bonhomie that such events inspire. And then I eventually stumbled home on a full tank, before I could do any further damage to my reputation. But not without consuming one of the steaming-hot puddings at the Käfers Weinschanke tent first. That was a treat not to be missed. The food tents are run by Munich's best restaurants, whose servings are big in both quantity and quality.

Outside the mayhem of the beer and food tents, the funfair, which covers half of the festival grounds and operates from morning till night, occupied the attention of the thousands of children brought to Oktoberfest by their parents, and a good many adults as well.

In keeping with the tradition of the Oktoberfest being a community event, many of the funfair's old-

fashioned Bavarian entertainments stalls are run by volunteers. They take time off from their ordinary jobs to juggle, whilst bird tames, ringmaster a flea circus, and, in the case of one man, dance about on tables dressed in a chicken outfit.

New and more commercially minded innovations include coffee shops and in-line skating rinks. And, of course, there were all the usual stomach-churning, bead-spinning rides and big wheels you would expect to find at the fair.

But the unsung heroes who make Oktoberfest possible are the waitresses. Mostly dressed in wide black skirts and white aprons, they will carry up to nine one-litre steins of beer at once, with the ninth glass balanced on top of the others. From 11am to 11pm, they muscle their way through flailing crowds of drinkers to deliver their orders.

All the beer is made by Munich breweries, which produce extra-strong festival brews for the occasion. Serious drinkers say you are unlikely to get a hangover, because all the beers are made only out of yeast, hops and water. It did give me a hangover - but I am glad it was a healthy one.

FACT FILE

Getting to Munich: British Airways (0845 222111) flies daily from Heathrow, Gatwick and Birmingham to Munich; Lufthansa (0845 737747) flies from Heathrow, Birmingham and Manchester; and Deboair (0541 500300) from Luton. The latter has flights to offer for £11.40 return including tax.

Getting to Paderborn: the most convenient airport is Dusseldorf; Paderborn is reached in two hours from Dusseldorf's main station. The German Travel Centre (0181 429 2900) is offering a fare of £90 return from Gatwick on British Airways; there are also non-stop flights from Birmingham, Guernsey, Heathrow, Manchester, Newcastle and Stansted.

German Rail/Deutsche Bahn has just moved back to central London; its new address and phone number is 13 Conduit Street, London W1R 9TD (0171 317 0919).

Getting information: the German National Tourist Office (PO Box 2695, London W1A 3TN 0171 317 0908). The line is open 10am-noon and 2pm-4pm from Monday to Friday.



A costume drama all for the sake of one saint

It was the feast day of St Liborius when we arrived at Paderborn, a town in West Germany. He was clearly very important - the place was crammed.

This was the first day of Libori-Fest, a nine-day extravaganza of celebration, and our German friend led us straight into the thick of it: we would just be in time for the procession of the shrine that contained the saint's relics. Outside the 13th-century cathedral, whose bells were pealing with mind-numbing intensity, tourists strained to see the purple-robed bishops and arch-

bishops making their way inside. Each year they turn out in force from far and wide to mark the day when the remains of this former bishop were brought over from Le Mans in the year AD836.

Inside, people stood on pillars and pews, even in the pulpit, to get a better view of the golden casket progressing solemnly down the nave.

It was borne by the "Libor-guard" - who are members of Paderborn's élite families - resplendent in floor-length robes heavy with gold trimmings. We caught glimpses of a gilded cross and a great fan of peacock feathers. The church

dignitaries were swallowed up by the jostling crowd, which was kept in order by men wearing dark green hats adorned with feathers: members, our German friend said, of a shooting brotherhood.

The Catholicism of Pader-

born was evident at every turn. There were shops with window displays of vestments in jewel-like colours; stalls in the market were devoted to religious carvings of serene Madonnas and jolly friars. Outside the

Franciscan monastery, in one of the busiest shopping streets, two young monks were making and selling waffles at a great pace. And everywhere there were priests and nuns on holiday: two ours buying ice-cream, another lingering at a market stall displaying lacy lingerie; a pair of priests strolling through the square, chatting and clutching their tankards.

In the main square, under the imposing facade of the Je-

suit church, also home to a theological college, a beer festival was in full swing. The beer used to be free; no longer, alas, but there was plenty of other free entertainment - marching bands, street performers, banners, and the inevitable speech from the mayor, followed by a mass hand-out of balloons shaped like ducks and bears to all the children.

Paderborn gets its name from its position at the source

of the river Pader - surely, at only four kilometres long, the tiniest river in Europe. Warm springs can be seen in a park close to the cathedral, 20 of them in all (though some barely raise a bubble). They appealed to the Emperor Charlemagne, however, and he became a base for his parliament and his campaigns. When Pope Leo visited him here in 799, Paderborn's religious importance was assured.

Here, fittingly, is the oldest half-timbered church in Germany, the church of St Bartholomew, built to be used by royalty in 1017. The later, medieval, architecture of the city is striking, too; it includes a magnificently gabled town hall with a multi-paned window facade, and Adam-and-Eve House, so called because of the carved and painted figures depicting the expulsion from paradise, which was built in the 15th century and now houses a museum. Everywhere, religion makes its presence felt, however obliquely: for example in the antiquarian bookshop in Schulstrasse, so welcoming of browsers that sofas are provided.

But during the nine days of the Libori festival at the end of July, the secular and the religious combine, with services, processions, plays, jazz and pop concerts, exhibitions - and, needless to say, Libori T-shirts. There is even Liboribrot: special loaves made just for this festival. Body and soul could not be better catered for than in Paderborn.

Libori takes place from 25 July to 2 August. Tourist information is available at Marienplatz 2a, 33098 Paderborn (05251 882980).

GREEN CHANNEL

IF YOU have ever been impressed by a place on your travels, or the green credentials of a company or project, now is the time to shout about it. The British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Awards are given annually to organisations or projects worldwide that are making strides to minimise their environmental impact or to support local communities.

This year they are asking the public to get involved by encouraging them to enter their favourite environmental tourism projects. If you have travelled with a tour operator who you think showed special commitment to green issues, if you've stayed at an environmentally friendly hotel, then contact British Airways and get them to send your nomination the entry forms.

RED CHANNEL

occurs at the main railway station, on trains and trams... Leave passports and valuables in a hotel safe, and do not carry large quantities of cash. Carry a photocopy of your passport. Validate your public transport tickets before use. Beware of bogus plain-clothes policemen who

may ask to see your foreign currency and passport. If approached, decline to show your money but offer to go to the nearest police station. Reports of racially motivated attacks on the local Romany population by skinheads are common. There have also been isolated, apparently

The awards are given to organisations in five regions: Pacific, Southern, Americas, Europe and the UK. There are also special awards for the mass tourism sectors, including long-haul and new awards by the World Conservation Union for the best entry from a national park or protected area.

SUE WHEAT

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Itinerary: Fly London to Cairo and connect directly to Aswan and board the MS Serenade for a three-day

house, and newly discovered area of Cleopatra's house. Return to the Mena House in the evening by express train and fly on Saturday morning from Cairo to London Heathrow with British Airways.

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Land that time remembered

Cephalonia was one of the great Greek secrets – until it became the subject of a modern classic. By Cathy Packe

IT IS hard to imagine that everyone who travels on the Orient Express passes the time reading Agatha Christie; certainly in the fens I have never noticed anyone reading Graham Swift's *Waterland*. However, if you go to Cephalonia without a copy of Louis de Bernières's best-known novel, you would certainly feel that you stand out in the crowd.

Until Captain Corelli's *Mandolin* reached the bookshops three summers ago, very few people had given much thought to the island of Cephalonia. Most visitors to the Ionian islands went to Corfu or Paxos, according to whether they wanted a lively resort or a sleepy village; over the last three years, the number of tourists going to Greece has risen from nine to 12 million a year, and the Greek embassy in London claims that Captain Corelli has had a "very definite effect".

Cephalonia is the largest of the eight Ionian islands, which guard the western side of the Greek mainland: Corfu at the northern end, is close to the coast of Albania, and Zakynthos in the south is a short ferry-ride from the Peloponnese. The building of an airport just outside Cephalonia's capital, Argostoli, has caused a small rash of tourist hotels, and the amenities that go with them, in the immediate vicinity. Outside this package-tour pocket, the inaccessibility of the roads and the hostile mountain terrain have meant that much of the island is completely unpolluted.

The scene of atrocities carried out by the occupying Germans in the Second World War: the island was ravaged by the terrible earthquake of 1953, in which the population of 128,000 was reduced to 20,000. Argostoli was almost completely destroyed, and has now been rebuilt as a modern town with lots of traffic snorting angrily around pedestrianised streets, and very little charm. Many mountain villages have been reconstructed higher up the slopes.

One of the few places to have remained untouched was the northern harbour village of Fiskardo. Many of its original Venetian houses remain, freshly painted each

year in blues and pinks. These days the buildings around the harbour have mostly been converted into tavernas and shops, and the local population is greatly increased in the summer months by visitors. But in the morning, you can still sit and watch a local fisherman arriving with his catch.

An astonishing variety of fish is unloaded into a large container of water, and each creature is carefully cleaned by hand. The local housewives, and the taverna owners, come down to the harbour and select the fish they want to cook that night, so if you see something you fancy you should take careful note of where it is going as it heads towards a restaurant kitchen.

At the other end of the day, the pace

is dictated by the return to the harbour of the flotilla of sailing-school boats which use the calm waters of the Ionian sea to teach city-bound would-be sailors their craft. For the land-bound visitor: the beauty of Fiskardo is that there is absolutely nothing to do.

Once you have had breakfast, picked up a few essential supplies, had a swim, a siesta and a light lunch, there is just time for another doze before you set out for the first drink of the evening. The local red and white wine is called Robola; inexplicably served from a bottle in a sack, it could never be mistaken for one of the world's finest, but it is nevertheless very palatable.

There are ferries from Cephalonian villages to neighbouring islands, but often the timings make them more suited to island-hopping than day-trips. The tourist office in Fiskardo has got round this problem by organising tours – although this is a formal way to describe them – which visit various points on nearby islands, stopping off from time to time for sightseeing, lunch, or swimming. The most interesting of these is the trip around Ithaca, the supposed homeland of Odysseus, which Homer described as "a rocky, severe island".

The contrast between the barren, uninhabited coastline facing Cephalonia.

and the greener, more populated eastern side, is striking, and there is the chance for lunch or a long walk around the charming village of Kioni. For some reason the tour which takes in the island of Lefkada concentrates on its more plebeian side – perhaps to suit the taste of the "Thomson's tribe", as one travelling companion scathingly described the package tourists, who were bussed in from the southern part of the island to join the boat trip.

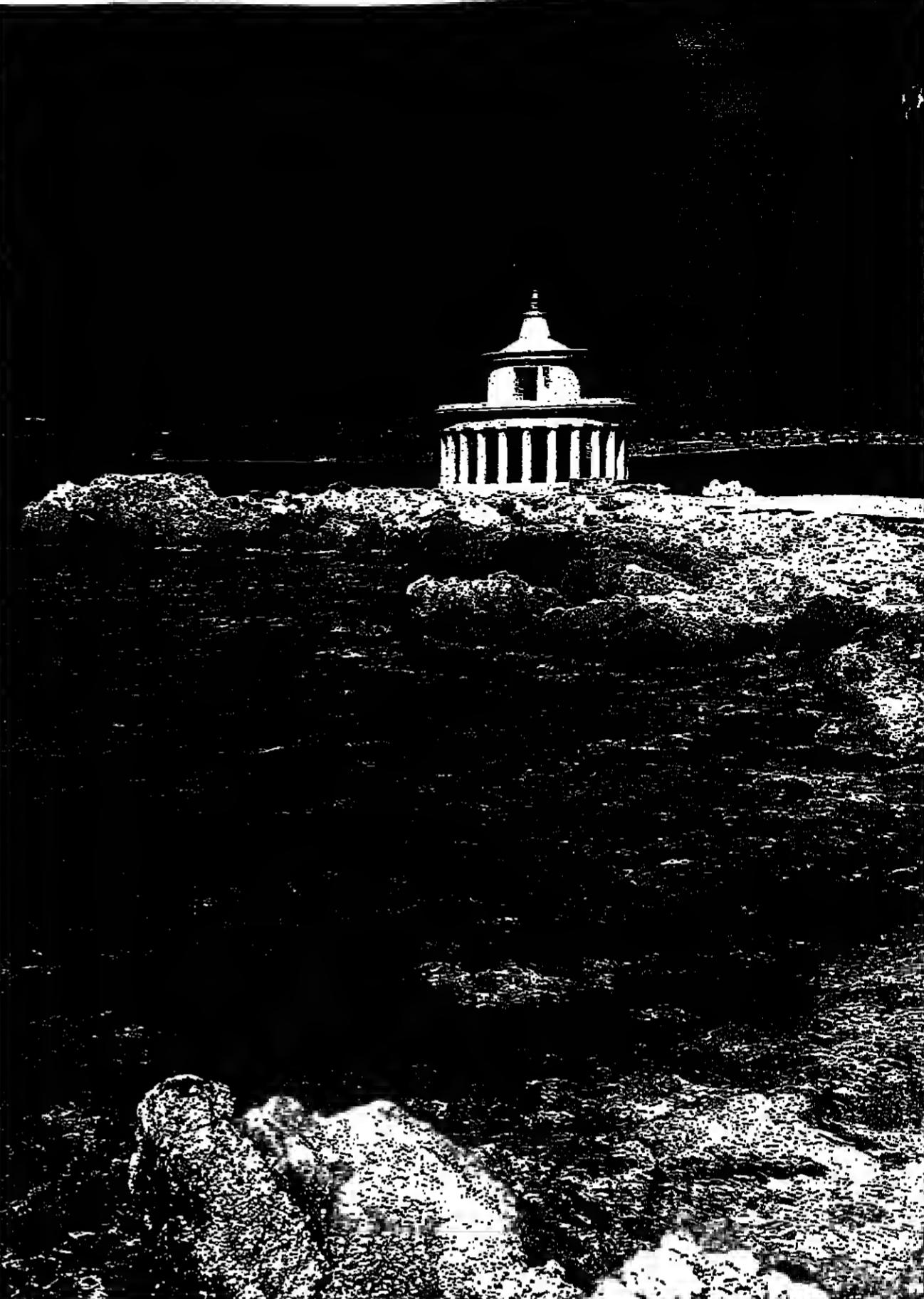
Transport around Cephalonia is more or less non-existent. The best way to explore the shoreline is to hire a little motor-boat and chug off down the coast. If you have the energy to explore the interior, it is worth hiring a car.

Like many Greek islands, there is nothing here that you absolutely must see, but the mountain scenery, and the remoteness of many of the villages, is breathtaking. It is impossible to get lost, even if you can't read the Greek signs, as most roads go round the island, with the exception of one which goes across the mountains to connect the village of Sami with the capital. The coastal villages nod towards the concerns of tourists, with tavernas and shops; there are caves and an underground lake to visit, but most of the settlements in the centre of the island are oblivious to the preoccupations of visitors.

The outside world is now taking an interest in Cephalonia, largely thanks to Captain Corelli. But apart from innumerable copies of the book, I saw no evidence of him on the island – no tavernas in his name, no walks, not even a mandolin concert.

When the captain returns to 1990s' Cephalonia at the end of the story, he laments that everything has changed. This seems to me a rather harsh judgment. With the exception of the area immediately around the airport, it is amazing how much remains the same.

Cathy Packe paid £160 for a week in Cephalonia with Simply Ionian (0181-995 1121). This included a return flight, self-catering apartment, and car hire.



Unspoilt charm – Cephalonia's lighthouse at Katavothres

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Where to find your Latin lava

Sarah Cutforth
swims in a fizzy sea, then climbs
a crater on the
Aeolian island
of Vulcano

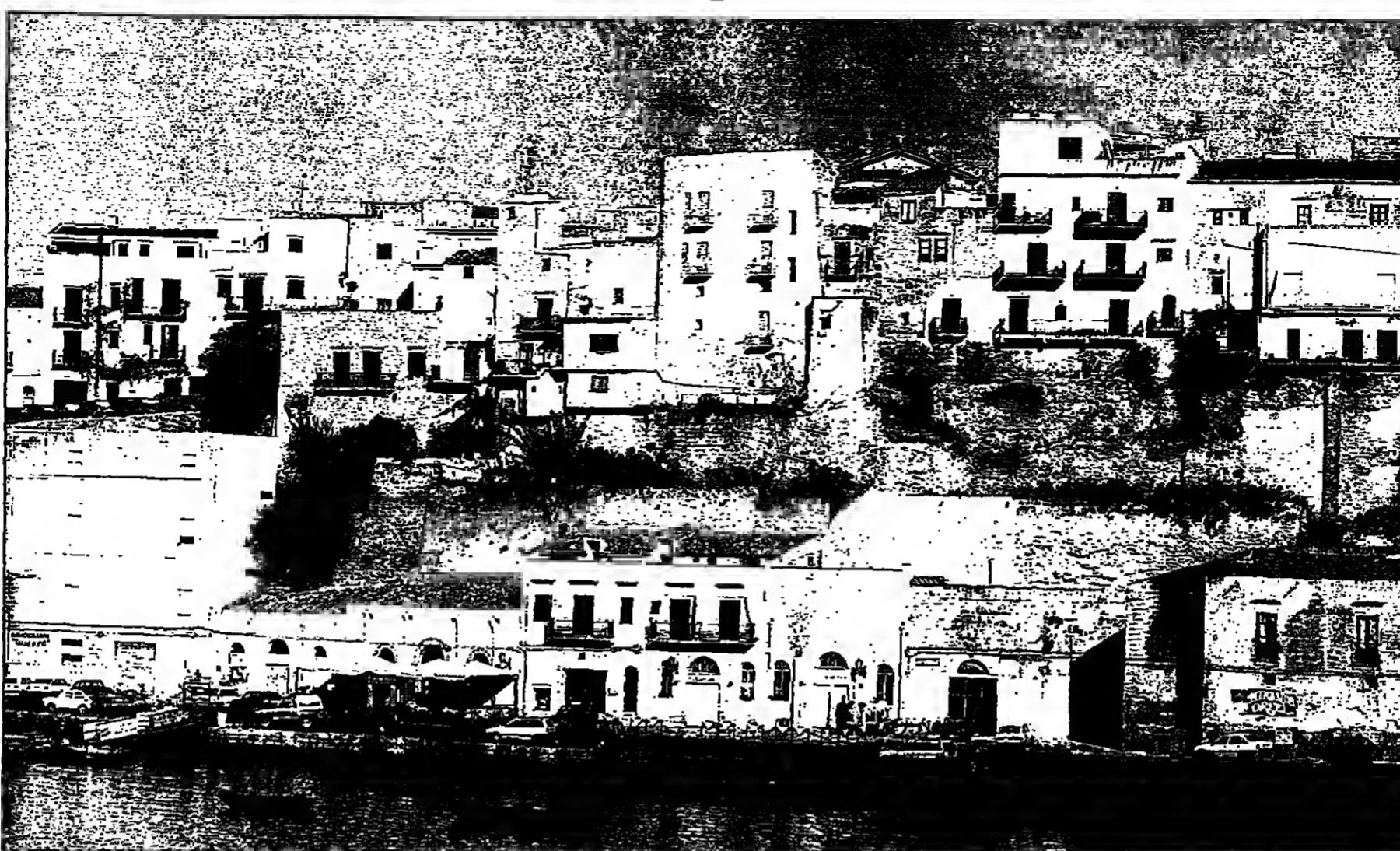
Juddering north from Sicily, the 12-mile hydrofoil trip to Italy's Aeolian Islands took about 40 minutes over a slappy, dark blue sea. Vulcano, the southernmost island, is the smaller and better behaved sister of Stromboli and the traditional holiday home of ancient Greek gods and pleasant middle-aged Germans seeking treatment for rheumatoid arthritis. Pretty much most of what there is to say about Vulcano is apparent from its name.

As we pulled in towards the port, a small group of older men on board, uncomfortable in holiday sandals, leapt up enthusiastically and started to mill around in an organising kind of way, plugging up bags and consulting pieces of paper as if preparing for an urgent business meeting. The rest of us sat dully, sniffing the unfamiliar, sulphurous air. Two blond children stopped playing at shooting each other and anxiously held oo to their knees instead. A strange silence descended.

We emerged to find the village of Porto di Levante flat out in the engulfsing afternoon sun favoured by small southern towns. With black-sand beaches and arid, spiky green scrubland giving way to bare volcanic hills in the distance, the place had the breezy, white-and-blue look of a lesser Greek island that had not been painted for a while. The air hung heavy with the smell of ancient essences being poached for some distant, unhappy breakfast.

Wherever you go on the island, a volcano - there are four in only 21 square kilometres - will not be far away. Only one of them is still active, though: the Vulcano della Fossa, which dominates the silent countryside side by the village.

Saving this for later, I walked into



Seasoned with sulphate - the sleepy village of Porto de Levante

the village. The road, like everything else, was sprinkled with a thin sulphurous dust which creeps into your shoes and lurks for several days afterwards. The place was silent in the sun; everyone from the hydrofoil had vanished. Probably, at this moment, the businessmen were already embarking on some elaborate briefing session deep in the distant volcanic hills. There did not even seem to be any cats.

In the main street, two boys in long shorts and army boots were buying warm beer from a small supermarket. Dimly lit local shops seemed to be gearing up for a

thriving summer trade in had postcards ("Big Kisses From Vulcano") and mystifying gifts involving pumice stone. There were cafés, and rumours of a night-club.

It seemed very cheering to find the economy of an entire village based on the vague possibility that the whole place would blow up beneath your feet. No matter how much effort people were putting into selling artistic tea towels, and pizzas that tasted as though they had been seasoned with copper sulphate, there was still no way of stopping the wildness creeping in at the edges.

At the same time, it remained

reassuringly unlikely that anything really would explode or erupt. Unlike its near neighbour, Stromboli, Vulcano has not evidenced any significant volcanic activity since 1890, when great chunks of lava last shot out of the Fossa crater, destroying the Scottish mining business based there.

These days, tourists provide most of the income for the island's 500 residents. Many visitors come for the day from Lipari and the other islands, but a dozen or so hotels cater for those who wish to stay longer, attracted by the therapeutic volcanic mud. Down by the port, I

came upon a giant puddle full of hot water the colour and consistency of cream-of-chicken soup. Several bathers lay silently half-submerged like rubbery crocodiles waiting for prey, while a smell of rotten eggs rose up around them.

The sea around the islands is notoriously stormy; the ferries are often out of action. Under its Greek name of Hiero, Vulcano was said to be the home of the Greek god Aeolus, who kept the wind imprisoned in a cave somewhere in one of the island's rocky inlets. It was muzzled tightly under some ancient equivalent of the Dangerous Dogs

Act, and let out to destroy passing ships on appropriate occasions.

It did not seem to be one of those when, later on, I set out to climb Vulcano della Fossa. Inland, the air was completely still in the late afternoon sun. The road to the crater, between scrubby bushes and lurid gorse, was deserted, and the bulk of the volcano seemed impossibly huge.

The route towards the crater veered away from the road, displaying encouraging road signs showing silhouettes of hikers with stout walking-sticks, then headed off up a sedate ashy slope before steepening on to pale, chemically smelling stone. A descending English couple said, smiling, that there was a long way to go. The path had begun to be hard and slippery underfoot and just as I began to worry, I came to the top and peered through the steam into the crater below.

It sank away in front, with little tracks down the side where stones, and possibly people, had rolled. Concerned signs suggested that you refrain from climbing down into the crater. This seemed like a good idea. But you could walk right around the top. The path ahead was flat and stony, and at one point sulphurous gusts of steam wafted across the earth in front, which itself appeared to be made of lemonade crystals. There was a perpetual fizzing sound and the smell was overwhelming.

The climber in front had already passed through this smoky curtain. A ridiculous pole, stuck in the ground, proclaimed "May peace prevail on earth" in one of the few places where you cannot fail to be reminded how little say we have in the matter. Still, from the crater you could look out across the dark-hued evening sea to see a ferry leaving below. Peace still seemed to be prevailing on earth, and it seemed to be time for a beer.

To get to the Aeolian Islands first travel to Palermo, Meridiana (0171-839 2222) flies direct from Gatwick, pausing at Florence; a high-season return costs £251. Cheaper fares are available on Alitalia via Milan, Rome or Naples.

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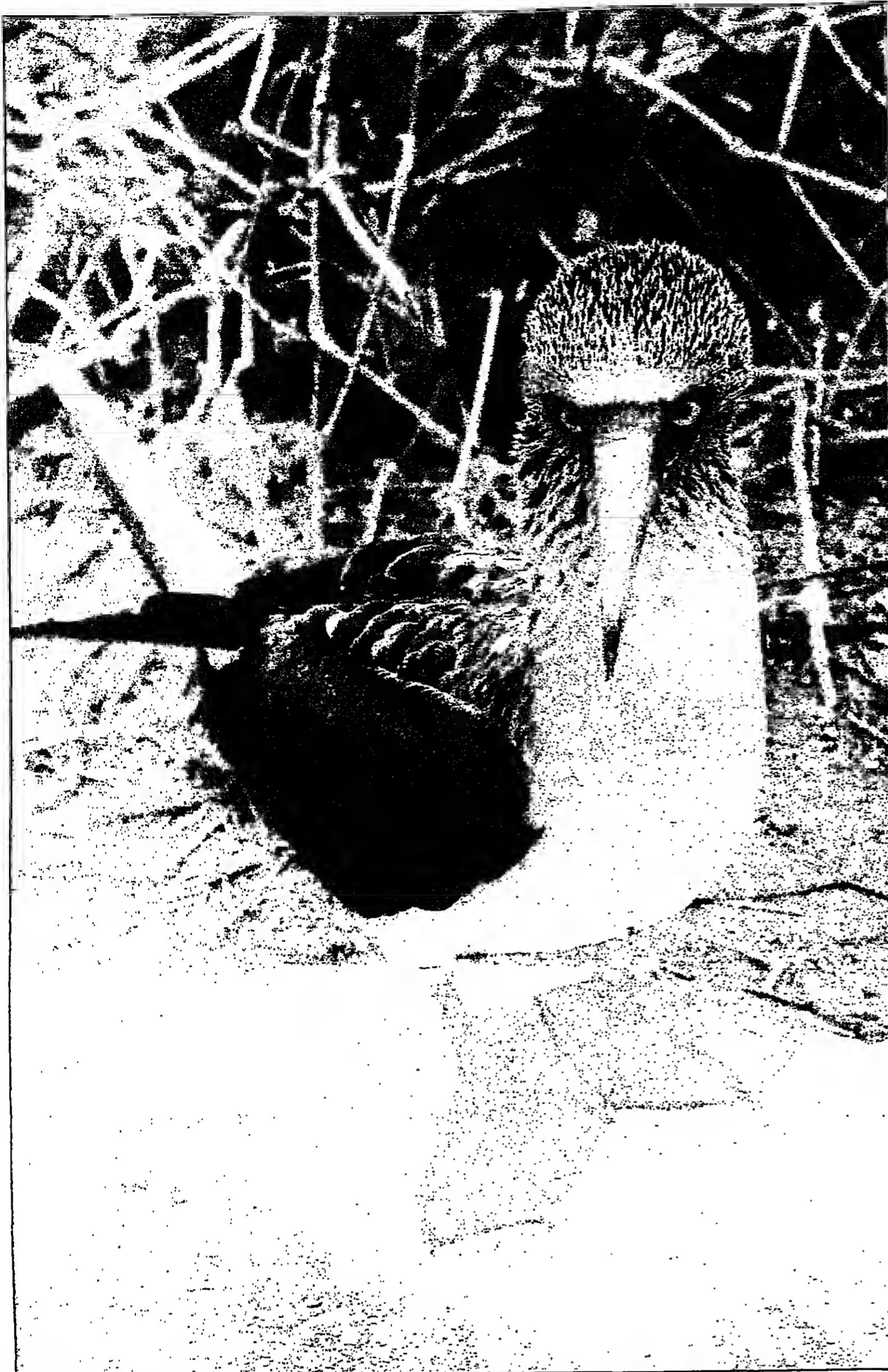
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Island dwellers: a blue-footed booby bird, above, and a marine iguana

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Survival of the fattest

In the Galapagos Islands, it wasn't the weird wildlife that worried Claire Boobbyer. It was her fellow tourists

There were 10 of them, all kept in close proximity for eight days. One was so large, he found it difficult lying down to sleep. And his behaviour seemed to offend the other nine.

One was constantly ill, and one had a close encounter with a marine iguana. These creatures – species type *Homo sapiens* – had come to view the wildlife of the Galapagos Islands. And, some of the time, observing the collection of tourists was as interesting as watching the animals we had come to see.

And so it was that 6ft 5in Anthony regaled us with tales of shark-spotting and his sea lion bite. His manner was not to everyone's liking, and the fact that he almost had to double up to get in his bunk was seen as just comeuppance. Beth, an American, was on holiday to escape the pressures of life as a psychologist.

There were two gay men who kept us amused with tales of outrageous fancy-dress parties, three Swiss tourists who hardly said a word, and another American who entered into banter with Anthony. And, finally, there was my sister, who was struggling to get over typhoid, despite having spent a week on the mainland, hospitalised, on a drip.

Eight days on a boat on the ocean with strangers is an integral part of any trip to this part of the world. We had flown from Quito to the island of Baltra. From here we boarded our boat, the *Cocholote*, via a dinghy.

We stepped over sleeping sea lions with our luggage, and a young blue-footed booby bird hitched a ride to what was to be our home for the next week. From out of the writhing and twisting black lava covering the volcanic islands of the Galapagos, wander birds with red balloons on their chests and lizards that look as if they belong on the set of *Jurassic Park*.

I set off on my trip to the Galapagos in the belief that the islands were studded with palm trees and that hirsute green hills spread inland. But we set foot on unfriendly, jagged outcrops of thick, solidified lava. We had to dodge deep chasms running through this bell-shaped landscape, and constantly see 20 or so large red speckled crabs scuttling loudly across our path.

The archipelago, which straddles the Equator, is a paradise for sea lions and birds. The tourists flock in their thousands to see these remote Pacific outposts. But slaughter and extinction lag at these islands' shores.

Charles Darwin, whose journey here was, after all, so groundbreaking, wrote in his journal: "The natural history of these islands is eminently curious and well deserves attention. Most of the organic productions are aboriginal creations, found nowhere else..."

What is also curious about the Galapagos animals is their fearlessness. Should they be on any of the paths that criss-cross the islands, they will simply sit and stare, preen, eat, mate or do whatever else they happen to be doing. Not one of them ran away in our presence. During our visit nine islands in the chain, we stepped over yellow land iguanas with manes of mini-horns, munching cactus; we stood in the flight path of albatrosses; and our feet were subject to inspection by inquisitive sea lions.

Each morning, it was announced whether it would be a dry or a wet landing. Dry meant boots, wet meant sandals.

Beth got confused one day and ended up missing a walking trip. While lying on the beach she felt something heavy on her stomach. Opening her eyes she found herself eyeballing a marine iguana. She screamed, which she later regretted, and he scampered off.

Watching tiny lava lizards hitching a ride on the backs of the ugly black marine iguanas – the only sea-going lizards in the world – and skirting the nests of busy booby birds, was all part of the entertainment of the islands.

Blue-footed boobies look as though they have stepped in a freshly poured dish of paint, and the red-footed variety seem unnaturally bright with their blue and pink beak and what looks like carefully applied blue eyeliner. In fact, a number of Galapagos birds sport thick eyeliner. The grey gulls wear a vivid orange, the baby frigate birds a dusky grey, and the Galapagos doves a thick line of light blue topped by black.

The sea lions, which do not indulge in eyeliner but have fine sets of whiskers, are quite simply cute. There is no other word for it. They bask in the sun on the white sand beaches like British holiday-makers. Their skin gleams, and they smile at you with their adorable faces. Snorkelling every day from our boat, we found ourselves coming face to face with these fun-loving creatures. They would twist and turn about us as we attempted to follow them in the clear waters.

Being so playful has its disadvantages. We had just landed on South Plaza Island, when we heard a commotion coming from the sea lion colony. We turned around to see the sea awash with blood: three sharks were attacking the sea lions.

One victim had a third of its tail chewed off, and was left to die on the rocks. Three fins glided up and down, parting the bloody waters, but the sea lions dived in and started teasing the sharks. This was no game, though, and another fell victim to the predators. Cries of "Oh, can't we go and rescue them?" were heard as we stood at a safe distance from the unfolding drama.

Giant tortoises have also suffered from predators. The only giant tortoises we saw on the islands were in captivity at the Darwin Research



Station on the island of Santa Cruz. In the last century whalers fed on the animals in their hundreds, storing them for months on end on the boats where they survived, unfed, living off their own fat stores. Today, some of the tortoise species that gave their name to the archipelago are extinct.

Meanwhile many dogs and goats that were introduced to the islands have turned feral, eating the iguanas and birds. And we even learnt that wild goats on James Island had adapted to the conditions in less than 100 years, and were now able to drink sea water.

All of which sounds enough to be amazed at. But on top of this there were moments of extreme wonder during our trip to the archipelago – the sight of leaping dolphins that trailed our boat, flamingos tiptoeing about a pond, and Galapagos penguins diving into the ocean.

We watched the sky turn black with birds like some horror movie scenario, and we observed the magnificent male frigate bird puff out his red chest and make a noise like a drum tap to attract the opposite sex.

Some of these curious-looking birds had droppings scattered down their chests. It is like a man trying to woo a woman with gravy down his tie – there is no accounting for taste.

FACT FILE

When to go
The period from the end of December to March is ideal, especially for snorkellers and divers, being warm and calm. July to December is mistier and drizzier (especially in September and October) but much of the wildlife is there all year round.

What to get there
First find your way to Quito, the capital of Ecuador. South American

Experience (0171-978 5511) has a fare of £526 including tax on Avianca via Bogota, or pay £3 more on Iberia via Madrid. From here, two airlines (Tame and San) fly to Baltra and San Cristobal respectively, for a fare of £200-£250 return. The Ecuadorian Air Force is another possibility.

What to sign up for
South American Experience says the total cost for a seven-night cruise can

be anything from £500 to £1,625. A hotel/cruise combination can cost as little as £450, and is especially suitable for those prone to seasickness.

What to read
The Odyssey Illustrated Guide to the Galapagos Islands by Pierre Constant (£14.95) contains the touching dedication: "To Mei Fang, who had to get up every morning to type the book instead of sleeping until noon, as usual."

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it wasn't the
Claire Boothe
Tourists

UPGRADED, BUMPED and downgraded - all within 15 minutes. St Petersburg airport was fairly lively last Monday evening.

As usual, I was travelling on a "bucket-shop" ticket: a cheapie on Lufthansa from Russia's second city via Hamburg to Heathrow. At check-in I waved a frequent-flyer card on one of Lufthansa's partner airlines and, without a word, the official handed me a boarding card in business class. I was shortly to find out why this perk had, temporarily, been accorded. There are few moments more laden with foreboding than when you hear your name being called at a Russian airport, with a request to return to passport control. The bureaucracy at St Petersburg is just as contrary as it was when the city was known as Leningrad, and regular travellers know not to celebrate their departure until well clear of Russian air space. Fortunately, there was no last-minute wrinkle with my visa or customs form. Instead, the Lufthansa check-in official was standing there with an offer of the unrefusable variety.

The flight to Hamburg is overbooked. Would you like to go straight to London instead? There's a British Airways flight half an hour later."

I acquiesced happily and immediately, and he exchanged my business-class boarding pass for a British Airways one - firmly in economy class. It became clear that I had only been upgraded in the first place because too many economy passengers had turned up. As is common airline practice, anyone with a frequent-flyer card is first in line for upgrades. So when one too many business-class passengers arrived, the cheap pretender had to go.

I could have held out for compensation - transport from Gatwick (where the BA flight arrived) to my intended destination of Heathrow, or EU-prescribed Denied Boarding Compensation for bumped passengers. But I stood to get home an hour earlier on the direct flight, so I just thanked him, then tried to use my unexpected new role as BA passenger to get into the Executive Lounge. I was thrown out, but by now I was getting used to rejection.

Yet had Lufthansa orchestrated the offer properly, I would happily have paid a reasonable sum to get a direct flight rather than a connection at Hamburg. Both airlines refuse to divulge how much Lufthansa paid BA for taking me home, but it is likely to be around £250 - almost as much as my return ticket. A donation from me of around £25 would have helped the German airline stanch its losses. But, in return, I would have asked for the business-class boarding pass as a souvenir of 15 minutes as a Lufthansa premium passenger.



SIMON CALDER

When one too many business-class passengers arrived, the cheap pretender had to go

IN TRAVEL terms, St Petersburg is a contrary city. On the Underground in London and in other cities, electronic displays show travellers when the next train is expected.

On the St Petersburg metro (and the half-dozen other underground networks in former Soviet cities), illuminated figures say merely when the last one departed. This is a nation that looks to the past rather than to the future.

THE RECENT past is confronted in a series of advertisements that British Airways is running in the St Petersburg press.

If you remember the Tupolev 144, the ill-fated Soviet supersonic aircraft dubbed Concorde, this pair of statements will be all the more significant.

"Do you know that if you are not a military pilot, Concorde is your only chance to experience supersonic [sic]."

"If you are not a cosmonaut, Concorde is your only chance to fly in the Stratosphere."

But after emphasising Western superiority in aviation, BA comes up with an offer that is well beyond Russian could refuse: "Fly Concorde to New York with our special offer of US\$3,780."

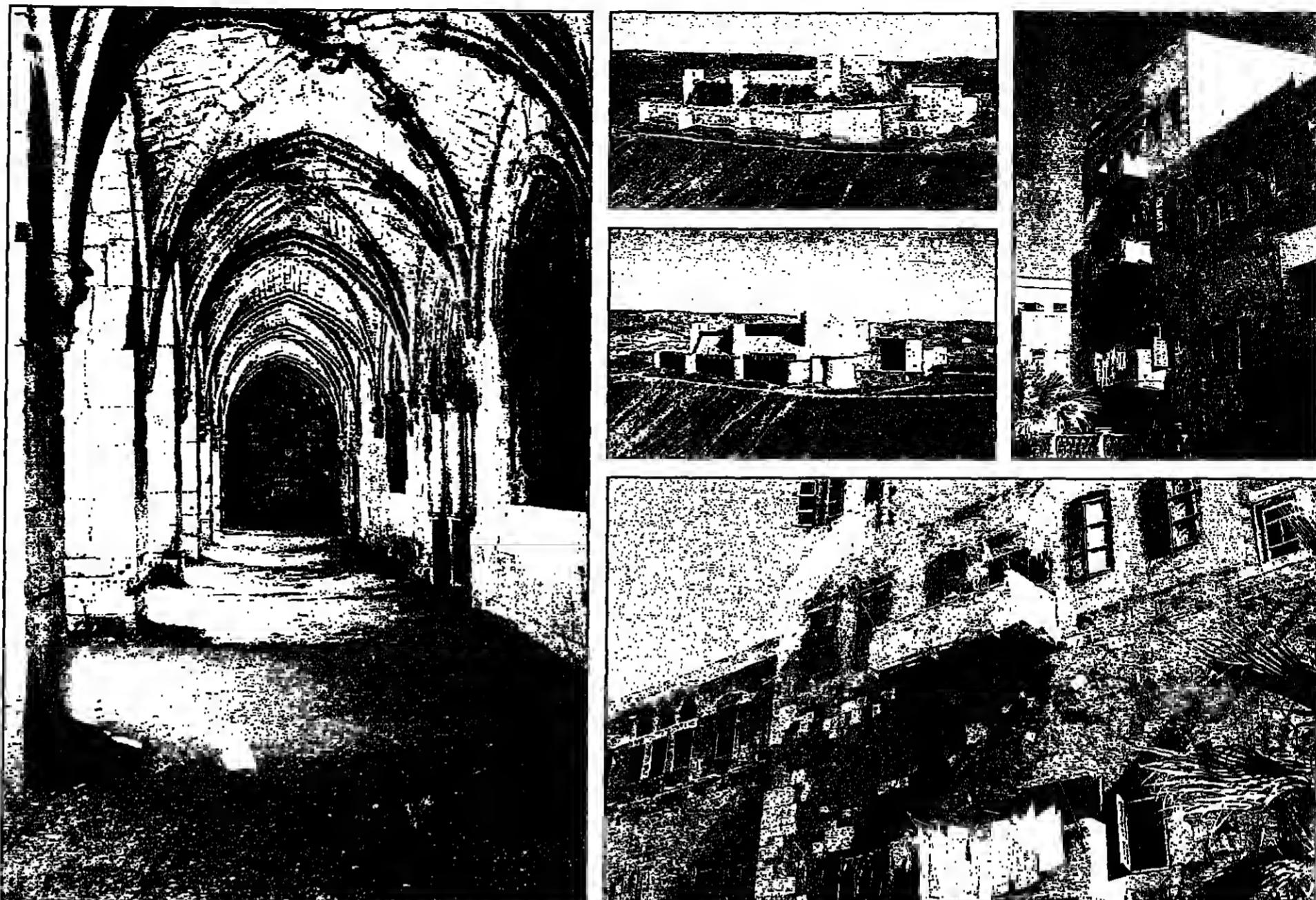
So, for around £2,100, you can fly in Club Class from St Petersburg to London and transfer to Club World to New York, and return supersonic, with a three-hour flight back to London, where a Club Europe seat at St Petersburg awaits.

This beats telling the comrades that you flew in from Miami Beach BOAC. It also beats the fare that we in the capitalist West must pay: if you call BA and ask for the lowest Club World/Concorde combo to New York, you will be quoted £5,034. The Club Class return to St Petersburg is normally another £1,256.

Yet although the Russians get the luxury treatment for one-third of the price we have to pay, they cannot expect an entirely smooth journey: the ad fails to point out that flights arrive at and depart from different airports, so these lucky passengers also get a bus ride around the M25 between Heathrow and Gatwick.

On the road to Damascus

Syria, the land of Crusades and Templars, has been overlooked by modern travellers for too long, writes Jonathan Phillips



Krak des Chevaliers tops Syria's list of attractions while the town of Tartous, right, radiates a welcoming, easy-going charm

Juliette Constantine/Jonathan Phillips

Picture this: a stagnant marina, a nearby container port and a ring-road choked with dusty lorries and ancient buses. Welcome to the town of Tartous on the Syrian coast.

With political instability endemic in the Middle East, Syria is not an obvious holiday destination; but for those in search of a hot climate and high culture, it offers great rewards. The cities of Aleppo and Damascus are the natural starting-points for visitors to Syria, but it is worth taking a break from the big cities and heading out to the coast where, in spite of its less salubrious outskirts, the old town of Tartous is intriguing. It is also a good base from which to visit the castle of Krak des Chevaliers, one of the most remarkable medieval sites in the eastern Mediterranean. But first, wander around Tartous itself.

At the heart of the town stands a Templar citadel, whose walls and courtyards survive submerged under the homes of today's inhabitants. Here, you encounter a bewildering mix of medieval and modern: lines of washing hang from ramparts; Crusader arches are distorted and extended to accommodate aluminium-framed windows; the lower part of an old refectory now forms three separate houses, yet ruined Gothic buttresses sprout from their flat concrete roofs. Exploring the citadel strikes a delicate balance between curiosity to see the past, and intrusion into the lives of the locals.

Syrian people are extraordinarily hospitable and naturally funny (our party, stricken by illness, was told that a film had opened in Damascus called *The Sick British*, meaning, of course, *The English Patient*). Throughout most of the country, Westerners are made to feel very welcome, and Tartous is no exception to this. The difficulties arise where the past and present co-exist in such close proximity. To see the remains of the Templar church, for example (a site that has a newly restored lintel and doorway), you will be asked to pay for its restoration.

The citadel is a mess; yet somehow its very tatteredness conveys an easy-going charm that more than compensates for its lack of obvious comforts. Down by the shoreline, for example, stalls display the morning's catch, while the food stores see vast quantities of fresh produce. None of the sanitised uniformity of supermarket fruit and vegetable counters here; there are cauliflower the size of foothills, mounds of misshapen tomatoes and pyramids of garish pomegranates.

Tartous is not simply about history, though. Strolling around the old town, your overriding impression is that the place is a mess; yet somehow its very tatteredness conveys an easy-going charm that more than compensates for its lack of obvious comforts. Down by the shoreline, for example, stalls display the morning's catch, while the food stores see vast quantities of fresh produce. None of the sanitised uniformity of supermarket fruit and vegetable counters here; there are cauliflower the size of foothills, mounds of misshapen tomatoes and pyramids of garish pomegranates.

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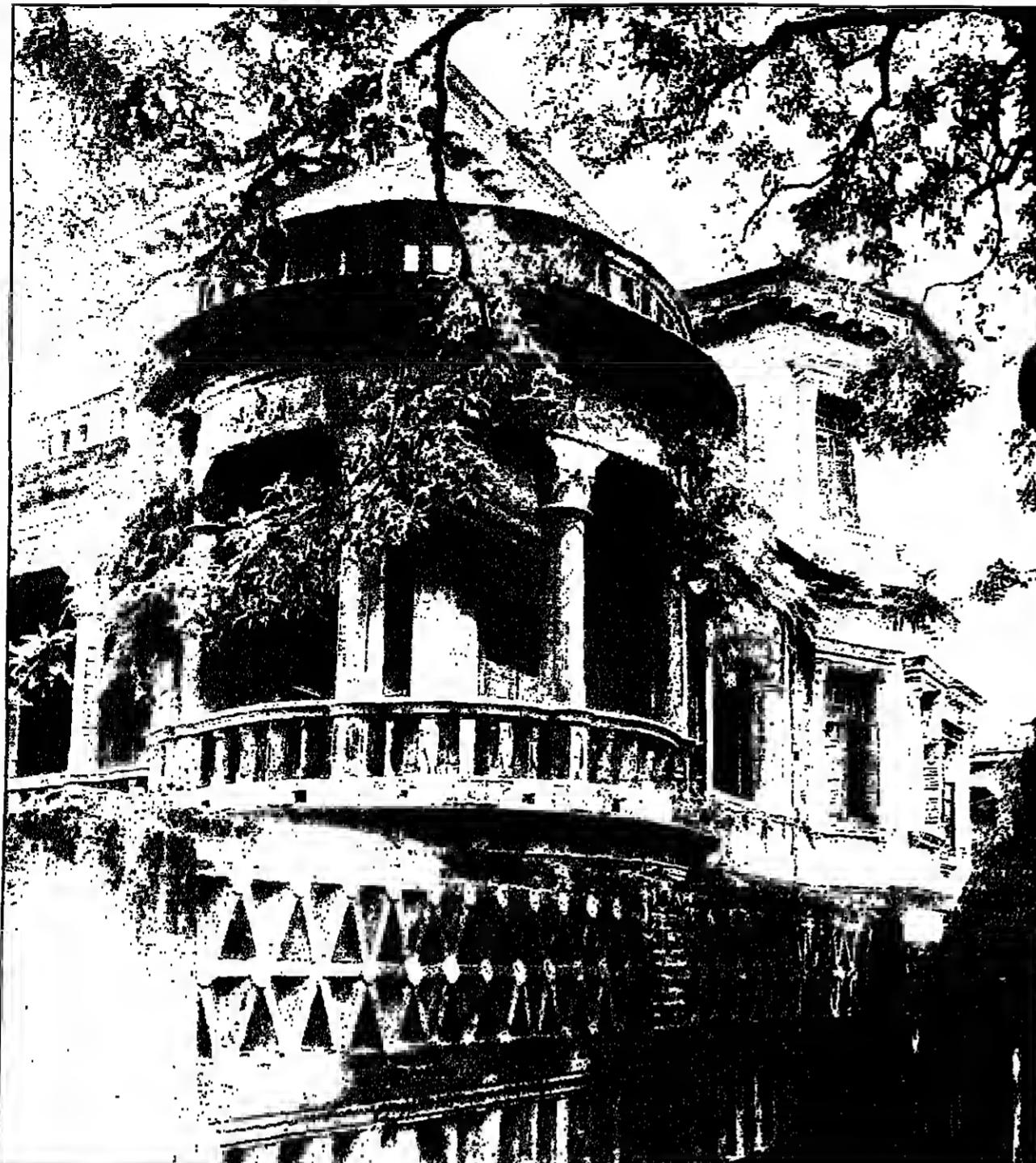
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TRAVEL

● GALAPAGOS GROUPIES 27

● BOULDERING FOR THE NOT SO BOLD 26



Xiamen's eclectic mix of colonial and ethnic architecture

Amar Grover

THE SATURDAY CROSSWORD

No. 3672 Saturday 25 July

By Phil

ACROSS

1 This paper is misguided about Rector or other man of God (6, 6)
 9 Pots slightly chipped by stones (7)
 (10) A quantity of oats, perhaps, is start for horse that's hungry (7)
 11 City - the sound of a huge mammal (4)
 12 and 24 Poor, poor Wales faced with onset of rain won't benefit from this! (5, 5)
 13 Lip from British marine? That'll have one imprisoned (4)
 16 Angry about no-good churl (7)
 17 Knight imprisoned in castle and losing heart - takes to this for prayer? (4-3)
 18 Saw demonstrator taking on first of hobbies (7)
 21 Plutocrat almost angry about selection of employment (7)
 23 Doubtful Judge removed in instant (4)
 25 Train off the rails? (4)
 28 One against participating in case seen as minor (7)
 29 Foolish characteristic, ignoring mother (7)
 30 I'd sand and trees waving around edge of lagoon (6, 6)

DOWN

1 What one's seen for a sudden departure? (7)
 2 Some more effective type of knot? (4)
 3 Play he's adopted for covert observation (3-4)
 4 Pal kept working, providing encouragement (3-4)
 5 Problem in East London causes irritation (4)
 6 Support for rider's anger about start of race (7)
 7 Uniformed girl indicates source of credit! (7, 6)
 8 Hit Much Ado set at sea has capacity to make money (3, 5, 5)
 14 and 15 Fruit chopped up by women later (5)
 19 Team hitting a bad patch - unable to score (7)
 20 Put on a charge and allowed a small amount of informative literature (7)
 21 Believes what one sees in the movies? (7)
 22 Second rush situation? (7)
 23 Princess from operetta could become an opera character (4)
 25 Train off the rails? (4)
 28 One against participating in case seen as minor (7)
 29 Foolish characteristic, ignoring mother (7)
 30 I'd sand and trees waving around edge of lagoon (6, 6)

Friday's solution
 FILSHFARMS SCAR
 O KIE PPLE LITERATI REASON
 GRIEF GREYAREAS BE PNI IN R
 LET IC VOI TIFF INHABITANT
 ABRAHAM KNEEPAD S EA UAE
 M C L M A E CLAIR LANDLORD
 PRONOUNCEMENT U B E A O
 S S L N R S SUBORN ALMOND
 COUNTERATTACK R A P N O
 EIMA EAE LODESTAR DOSAGE
 MELANIN DORMANT R V E E S
 ELLIK FTRC OPTICALARTY GIBBE
 TRANSVAAL IRISH H A B C A L O
 ITI Y A S E E PASTEL HACIENDA
 CREW DIGITALIS N E E H E Y

Last Saturday's solution
 H H H T P Q
 LITERATI REASON
 BE PNI IN R
 TIFF INHABITANT
 S EA UAE
 CLAIR LANDLORD
 U B E A O
 SUBORN ALMOND
 R A P N O
 LODESTAR DOSAGE
 R V E E S
 OPTICALARTY GIBBE
 H A B C A L O
 PASTEL HACIENDA
 N E E H E Y

TODAY'S TELEVISION APPEARS IN THE SEPARATE LISTINGS GUIDE

Amoy and the ancestors

Xiamen, once Amoy, an island off Hong Kong, holds memories of a turbulent history. Amar Grover explored

The spartan shelves of "No 1 Shop" harboured few oddities. There was that old favourite, Pearl Powder, and a daunting concoction in vials, called Eastern Magic Juice. "No 2 Shop" was a clone of the first one, and Nos 1 and 2 bars were about as cheerful as cold dim sum.

Such austerity did not square with our cruise through Hong Kong's harbour, surely the No 1 way to depart this gitzty city. Gleaming temples of trade slid away as we sailed on through the South China Sea. The crew, all neat blue blazers and skirts, had greeted us effusively when we boarded; now they settled down to chat or disappeared altogether. Passengers were left to their own distractions. The Jimel, a utilitarian ferry of fluorescent lighting, linoleum and unlockable cabins, was a far cry from sophistication.

China's bulkheads have not always been so secure. Serious leaks developed after its first Opium war, when the 1842 Treaty of Nanjing declared five "treaty ports". Shanghai became the biggest and brashest, Amoy the most picturesque. A century and a half later, Amoy's name has changed to Xiamen. It is awash with Taiwanese money - and the Jimel sails there regularly from Hong Kong in 12 hours.

Xiamen is an 80-square-kilometre island lying just off the mainland and linked to it by a causeway. The main draw is Gulangyu islet, which faces Xiamen city across a busy, narrow channel. Foreign traders flocked here from around 1850. As an "international concession", as well as treaty ports, it had special privileges that created an enclave exempt from Manchu authority. In time wealthy Chinese merchants came abroad too. They all lived well. Palatial mansions lined by winding shady lanes enriched its low hills. Tangy breezes cooled and sea views beckoned.

Remarkably, for today's go-ahead China, little has changed.

I was joined on deck next morning by Tin, a student returning home for the summer. Rusty freighters lay at anchor and the odd sampan bobbed on the swell. The Jimel had slowed to a crawl and Xiamen hung on the horizon. "Giving us time for breakfast, are they?" I joked.

Gradually Xiamen's hills and youthful cityscape - a bit like Hong Kong's 40 years ago - bove into view. As we neared shore, he pointed to Gulangyu. You cannot miss

its enormous statue of Koxinga, the 17th-century pirate king who booted the Dutch out of nearby Taiwan. Today he glares east at the nationalists across the sea, as though evangelising true salvation lies in the lands at his feet.

Grimey terracotta roofs poked through a canopy of green. Waves lapped thin beaches as pavilions emerged between pines. Tin became wistful, and in a surge of nostalgia he offered to show me round. We agreed to meet next day.

His family now live in a typically bland modern suburb, but Tin's heart lies with the little island where he grew up. It was not hard to see why. There's faded grandeur in its crumbling mansions with their jalously windows, porches and verandas. Gulangyu has lanes instead of roads, and there are no cars. Occasional electric buggies whirr past, containing Chinese tourists lured by tranquillity, sea food and the beach.

Xiamen has long lived on trade and today's pragmatic approach is apt. Mercantile history has come full circle. It was declared a Special Economic Zone in the early Eighties, and its skyscrapers soar as the city booms. There is a distinct air of chutzpah down Zhongshan Lu, the city's commercial artery. I dawdled in a shoreline park by flashy floating-restaurants before scrambling aboard a ferry bound for Gulangyu.

Just minutes away from all that hustle and bustle and the noise and smells, Tin explained how expensive life had become. Overseas Chinese now own most of the best houses, and prices have rocketed.

We had wandered through a busy quarter where stalls sold tat to the tourists. Young, beaming women stood outside restaurants amid gurgling basins full of live eels, crabs and lobsters. In quiet neighbourhoods, birds sang from cages and muffled chatter whirred through open windows. Snatches of piano tinkled here and there. Stopping before a kind of stuccoed portal with iron gates, Tin announced our arrival.

Art students were moulding huge plaster busts of a local specialty broth were plonked down before us. Cooks looked on in first-foreigner-across-their-threshold amazement. Diners sucked and slurped contentedly. Tin had seen the house of his dreams, yet in reality it was as elusive as an ancestral spirit. "Money and connections," he sighed. Even luck was not enough: 150 years on, Gulangyu is as desirable - and almost as exclusive - as ever.

Later we climbed to the first floor another household. A man in shorts and vest waved us through: a cook, I thought. "The owner," muttered Tin. "Family in Taiwan, very wealthy..." he trailed off. High, coffered ceilings yielded cool and airy rooms. The top floor had been crudely modernised, squeezing in an extra flat. From the terrace we gazed across magnolia-filled compounds at verandas lush with potted plants. Even in decay there was a lingering elegance.

This mansion was one of eight built for the sons of the wealthy Ying family; others lay nearby. European styles and motifs had fused with Chinese principles of feng shui that dictated their location and aspect. The most imposing of the lot - a neo-classic red-domed pile, now the Xiamen Museum - sat atop a low hill.

It looked like an exercise in aggrandisement. With domed hall and cavernous corridors, this felt more like a tomb. Much of its displays were limited to photographs of Gulangyu's historic buildings. One section displayed other countries' national gifts. Another examined the opium trade, uncomfortable perhaps for British visitors who, if cornered, might struggle to explain away that 19th-century economic thuggery.

Gulangyu's imperial Sino-foreign police force is long gone. The old British consulate stands somewhat forlorn down by the sea. Old enmities have been forgotten if not forgiven. Now Taiwan is subject to periodic venom. Politically its very existence rankles. Officially its investments are welcome. And privately it intrigues.

Small-time entrepreneurs have not missed a chance. Each morning their telescopes pop up along the islet's southern shores. For a fee of about 7p, punters squat across the waves at outcrops of the Taiwanese-held Jinmen islands. There is little to see: a few hills, the odd pillbox and some scrubby cabins. There are huge signs, too, that face Xiamen and pledge eternal brotherhood.

I met up again with Tin in the evening. We fell into a greasy caf. Steaming bowls of a local specialty broth were plonked down before us. Cooks looked on in first-foreigner-across-their-threshold amazement. Diners sucked and slurped contentedly. Tin had seen the house of his dreams, yet in reality it was as elusive as an ancestral spirit. "Money and connections," he sighed. Even luck was not enough: 150 years on, Gulangyu is as desirable - and almost as exclusive - as ever.

FACT FILE

Getting there: Air China (0171-630 0919) but fly only to Peking at the moment. British Airways (0345 222111), Cathay Pacific (0171-747 8888) and Virgin Atlantic (01293 747747) fly non-stop between Heathrow and the Hong Kong Special Autonomous Region of China.

Red tape: British passport holders need no visa to enter Hong Kong, but beyond that you need a Chinese visa, which is most

easily obtained through the China Travel Service, 7 Upper St Martin's Lane, London WC2H 9DL (0171-836 3688).

This agency charges £10 on top of the normal £25 fee. You need your passport, a completed application form and one photograph. Allow a week for processing. You can obtain a visa more quickly in Hong Kong if you are travelling to China via the SAR, and pay only HK\$100 (about £28).

There have been some reports that the documents of British visitors are currently being checked especially assiduously by Chinese officials because of the present political differences over Hong Kong.

Getting around: The Yick Fung Shipping vessel sails twice a week from Hong Kong to Xiamen; the cost of the one-way fare will be approximately HK\$750 (about £70).

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INSTEAD

YOUR MONEY

PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

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Car insurance to cost more

A ruling to give accident victims more compensation means higher premiums. By Paul Slade

The bad news for drivers doesn't stop with this week's White Paper on transport. Car insurance premiums may also be on the way up, too, thanks to a House of Lords compensation ruling earlier this month.

Investment experts believe the Lords ruling will give accident victims more compensation than the courts intend. Graham Bates of Leeds independent financial advisers Bates & Partners, says: "It's certainly going to be a winner for the victims, but the public are going to suffer higher premiums all round."

The Lords ruling settles three long-running test cases involving accident victims who believed the compensation payments they got from insurers were too low. The point at issue was how claimants should invest the lump-sum compensation they receive to provide an income and meet the cost of care for the rest of their lives.

Insurers argue that claimants will put their compensation into equities, giving an annual return of 4 or 5 per cent over and above inflation. But the Lords rejected this view, saying equity investment was too risky; instead, they ruled that insurers and the courts should assume claimants will invest in far safer index-linked gilts, reducing their return to 3 per cent above inflation.

Getting the same annual income from this assumed lower growth rate means a larger lump sum must be awarded in the first place. This means, in turn, that insurance premiums must rise to match the cost of bigger claims. Motor insurance rates will be hit, as will em-



David Cronenberg's film, 'Crash', portrays the seductive power of motoring accidents. But for those who are seriously hurt, compensation matters - and it could cost us more in premiums

ployers' liability and professional indemnity premiums.

Mark Boleat, director general at the Association of British Insurers, says: "This is something that is clearly going to increase insurance companies' claims in future years. Insurers will simply increase their premiums to match the expected extra payments."

Personal accident cases produce

big claims. In *Wells v Wells*, one of the three test cases, the effect of the Lords ruling was to increase Mrs Wells' compensation for injuries suffered in a car accident from £1,120 to about £1,600 - a rise of 45 per cent. Mr Wells was driving the car at the time, and was insured by ITT London & Edinburgh.

However, Graham Bates says he

would never advise someone like

Mrs Wells to put the whole £1,600 into index-linked gilts. "It would be an absolute nonsense, because one of the keys to successful investment is to have a balanced approach and a sensible spread of different investment types. The ruling is erring on the side of caution, but it is also erring on the side of stupidity."

No-one seems very sure just how

big the increase in premiums will be.

AA insurance director George Lowe says: "You get various estimates. Some people say 7.5 per cent. I think it will be about 4 per cent or 5 per cent on a fully-comprehensive policy, and about 3 per cent on non-comprehensive cover."

ITT London & Edinburgh group

marketing manager Lloyd Hanks' guess is also that motor premiums

would add about £15 a year to the cost of a typical policy.

Mr Boleat says the result of the change will be to give compensation claimants a better deal, as they will get both the larger lump sum payment, and a higher investment return than the court assumes.

He would rather see lump-sum compensation replaced by a system of annual payments. If the court de-

cided the victim should get, say, £50,000 a year, the insurer would simply hand over a cheque for that amount, plus inflation, year by year for the rest of the claimant's life.

But claimants are unlikely to accept this solution as it would cut the amount they get. Boleat says: "If a lawyer is trying to get as much money as possible for his client, he may press for the cash sum."

The Lords ruling comes at a time when insurers say motor premiums already need to rise.

The dog-eat-dog motor insurance market, where policies are often sold on price alone, has forced insurers to hold premiums down despite rising claims.

Derek Howie, assistant lia-

PREMIUMS UNDER PRESSURE

bility manager at Eagle Star says: "We've had about three years of premiums going down. We have been struggling against falling rates at a time when claim costs generally are rising way above the retail price index."

The Association of British Insurers' (ABI) latest figures show that motor insurers' underwriting loss grew by 62.6 per cent to reach £1.14bn in 1997. This figure represents the difference between claims paid out and admin costs ves-

rus the amount received in premiums. But it takes no account of the investment income that insurers get from the premiums they hold.

"This level of underwriting loss is not sustainable," the ABI says, adding that premi-

ums increases are "much needed" - though presumably not by policyholders.

Part of the problem is fraudulent vehicle recovery companies, car hire firms, repair shops, solicitors and doctors. By dishonestly inflating the cost of damages, they add about £30m a year to the cost of claims.

Call to curb carpetbaggers

Nationwide's mutual status should not face annual challenges, say MPs. By Nic Cicuttini

PRESSURE ON the Government to change the law to prevent building societies from being forced to undergo repeated ballots on their mutual status mounted this week, as Nationwide members voted to reject calls to seek a stock-market listing.

The All Party Building Societies Group, which represents 112 MPs and Peers, is urging reforms to the rules for society elections after Nationwide faced off rebel demutualisation candidates for the second time running.

More than 2.3 million members who voted in this year's elections to the society's board backed by a 6 to 4 majority a slate favouring keeping the Nationwide mutual. They also agreed, by a far narrower majority of 35,000 votes, not to float on the stock exchange.

Under Nationwide's rule, the issue of whether to de-mutualise

does not need to be put before members for another three years. But Michael Hardern, a twice-defeated candidate for the board, and any of his supporters could in theory mount a third challenge next year. Reports suggest he is presently undecided.

Andrew Love, MP for Edmonton and chairman of the all-party group, says: "Now that Nationwide has convinced its members for two years running of the benefits of mutuality, it is time to look again at the rules surrounding building society elections. Surely it is right that fundamental decisions about the future of a mutual society should require a significant level of support before de-mutualisation."

He points out that in order to

convert from a building society, three times as many people as actually voted for the conversion resolution would have to vote in favour: "I don't believe that is a mandate for conversion in any sense at all, and I hope anyone considering a predatory approach will bear that in mind."

Irrespective of any future vote, Nationwide is likely to face continuing pressure on its pledge to deliver better savings and mortgage rates than its de-mutualised rivals. Stephen Geraghty, managing director at Direct Line, the telephone-based financial services company, says: "The real issue is not the choice between mutuality or conversion but the benefit to customers in the long term. It will be interesting to

see what happens to customers' rates now Nationwide no longer has the threat of an impending vote to manage."

Brian Davis, the society's chief executive, says the Nationwide vote was "good for all consumers in the nation" as it will retain fierce competition for the banks.

As a first step, Nationwide is pledging to reduce its interest rate margins, the difference between the rates paid by borrowers and those paid to savers, from their present 1.49 per cent rate, to 1.15 per cent within two years. If this were achieved, the rate would be more than half that of Halifax, which currently stands at 2.48 per cent.

Mr Davis adds that Nationwide will retain its current 8.1 per cent variable interest rate for borrowers beyond the initial 1 August deadline, keeping it 0.85 per cent below that charged by most rival lenders.

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Jonathan Davis

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BAAZ

THERE WILL be more City whizz-kids than usual subsisting on a diet of take-away pizzas and cold coffee this weekend. The motive behind their feverish round-the-clock workaholism will be to decide whether their financial institution, or the one they are advising, should mount a takeover bid for Nationwide Building Society.

Nationwide this week escaped being forced to begin the process of de-mutualisation – or of having to find a suitor for its not unattractive charms. To be sure, the vote in favour of retaining the society's mutuality was won by the narrowest of margins: 35,000 votes out of more than 2 million cast.

And so the calculation is smoky City offices may well be to go ahead with a bid for Nationwide. After all, it is one thing to vote against the idea of conversion but another to reject a cheque for £2,000 dangled in front of your nose – or so some men in wrinkled suits and gaudy braces will reason.

If so, perhaps the City men should think again. This week's ballot was not a plebiscitary endorsement of Nationwide's pro-mutual strategy. But in a democracy we live by majority vote – and in this case the majority went in favour of Brian Davis and his team at Nationwide continuing with the strategy they have argued passionately in favour of for the past two or three years. They deserve the chance to carry on.

To do anything else – to invoke some higher, even spiritual, link with members, to pretend that even if they voted one way they really wanted something else – will be to reveal a profound contempt for the underlying sense of decency and the rejection of instant greed solutions that more than a million voters ultimately showed for the likes of Michael Hardwick and his chums. It would mean saying: "We know you voted one



NIC CICUTTI
City men in braces would do well to leave the Nationwide alone

way, but because we believe you were wrong – and greedy – we will continue to dangle cash before your eyes until you give in."

In writing this, I am fully aware that there will be many long-standing Nationwide members who believe passionately in the merits of conversion for their society. The society's commercial success in recent years has been built on the back of their custom. I suspect, however, that they will be the ones who are most prepared to accept the majority decision given this week by their fellow-members. They may feel disappointed, but by doing so they will help ensure keener competition in the mortgage and savings market for years to come.

At the same time, I also know that there are upwards of 900,000 members who joined Nationwide in the past year or two. For many of them the primary motivation was to gut and fillet the society's assets, to grab a fat cheque despite having contributed nothing to its growth. For now, these so-called carpetbaggerers have failed in their attempt.

To them, and the City men pondering their next move this weekend, I have only one message: greed doesn't always win out. Now bog off and leave Nationwide and its genuine members in peace.

Mark is a former captain in the Royal Corps of Transport and left the army two years ago to become a policeman. This entailed a drop in salary of about £3,000 a year.

While stationed in Germany Mark met and married his wife Clare, a primary schoolteacher and modern language expert. They both now live in Guildford, Surrey, in a cottage valued at £140,000, with a £28,000 mortgage with the Halifax. Mark has endowments which are designed to pay off the mortgage.

The couple are expecting their first baby in September. Like all new parents to be, the lives of Mark and Clare will change dramatically when their child arrives. This will mean different priorities for them both, and they know that preparing for the child's birth means assessing their financial, as well as their domestic affairs.

The Adviser: Mike Coates is partner at Optima Financial Management, 9 High Street, Harefield, Middlesex, UB9 6BX (01895 822441).

The Advice: Clearly the major item on the agenda for Mark and Clare is the arrival of their baby in September and they are worried about how this will affect their outgoings.

Having recently bought a new car, they have little cash in the building society and so the first priority for them is to create a crisis fund that will help them cope if the roof falls in.

Mark feels that they would feel much more comfortable with something like three months net income in this pot, and so £8,000 is a good figure to aim for before spending money on other investments.

I would recommend they fund into an instant-access deposit account, where the interest even on low amounts, will be as much as 7 per cent. There are several accounts now offering this rate of interest and I would

recommend using the Best Buy tables published in newspapers such as *The Independent* for the most up-to-date offers. After they have their £8,000 they can then look to investing in higher potential areas, as well as topping up their pensions. Their mortgage is at a high level as a multiple of their salaries. This is a legacy of Mark's time in the army, when their disposable income was higher.

Despite this, Leeds and Hockeck will accept them on a variable rate of 8.45 per cent, saving them £57 per month over their Halifax mortgage, as well as offering them a lump sum of £6,440. They must take buildings and contents with their new lender and there is a

£295 arrangement fee which can be added to the loan and a £25 application fee. The Halifax will almost certainly charge them a redemption penalty, but no more than £2,500 to £3,000, meaning they should net about £3,050 by remortgaging.

I would recommend that they save this £3,000 and the £57 per month in the instant-access account. Mark feels they could save another £50 per month on top of this, meaning they will gradually move towards a position they feel comfortable with.

In the absence of a crisis pot, I would recommend that Mark and Clare look to life assurance to replace an income if either of them were to die. They are both members of excellent

company pension schemes, both of which contain some death-in-service benefits.

If anything were to happen to Mark, Clare would receive about £54,000 from the Police Pension Fund, as well as the equity in the house and two endowment policy proceeds amounting to £100,000, making a total of £204,000. This should provide an income of about £14,280 a year assuming a return of 7 per cent, replacing about 80 per cent of Mark's income. If anything were to happen to Clare, Mark would only receive a £43,000 lump sum from her pension scheme, but the mortgage would not be paid off, and there would be no extra income for nannies and schooling. Clare could secure £100,000

life cover over 15 years for as little as £6.90 per month with Legal & General.

The wider implications of not securing adequate life cover without having capital to back up their current lifestyle might mean that Mark would have to move back to his parents' or selling the house to move to a cheaper area.

The use of trusts to avoid any inheritance tax complications should they both die would also be important here, and they should consider making a will soon, as Mark's army will is now out of date.

Preserving their standard of living while alive is just as important as catering for the worst eventuality. For many

years to come, Clare will be

receiving an income from her

pension scheme, and she will

have to pay tax on this. She

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is pot. Learn to love a duck

They began as licences for hunters in the US and became sought-after collectors' items. Now, writes John Windsor, duck stamps are flocking across the Atlantic

The eighth annual issue of British duck stamps was launched yesterday by Baroness Young, recently appointed vice-chairman of the BBC and chairman of English Nature.

Duck stamps are the latest investment collectable. They are familiar enough to the country landowners in wellies and brogues who heard the baroness's speech at their annual game fair at Stratfield Saye, the Duke of Wellington's Hampshire estate. But you will not find them in your mail.

They are non-philitic charity issues, sold by the Wildlife Habitat Trust for a fiver each, as the best way "to invest for the future of the countryside".

To those in the know, they are also a pretty good investment in themselves. Duck stamps have taken off as a collectable in the United States, their country of origin, where they have been issued as compulsory shooting licences since 1934. There, the rarest is worth \$9,000 (more than £5,600). Americans need to buy both federal and state duck stamps in order to shoot legally.

Hitherto, "Cinderella" stamps - non-philitic perforated labels - have been looked down on by stamp collectors. But in the United States since 1985, stamp albums that show black-and-white reproductions of new issues in the spaces where collectors are meant to display the real thing have made them a must-have. The fact that they can be bought from American post offices has also given them legitimacy among stamp collectors. They are listed in the prestigious American Scott stamp catalogue.

Britain now has its own specialist dealer in duck stamps - John Wells of Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire - and Stanley Gibbons stocks American federal issues.

In fact the British example has encouraged other countries - Ireland and Iceland, as well as countries in Europe and Scandinavia - to issue their own duck stamps. That may be better news for stamp collectors than for wildfowl in the "duck factories" of the Baltic states, where money from duck stamps is financing the breeding grounds of birds that will eventually become hunters' targets.

Britain's duck stamps, at £5 face value, have so far shown a modest increase in value. The most expensive, a 1991 first-issue, can still be had for £12.50 from Mr Wells - although it is said to have changed hands for £200 when British collectors first latched on to duck stamps and the market was still raw. Mr Wells reckons that British duck stamps are about to rise more rapidly in value than the duck stamps of America, where the market for them is long-established.

The Americans are masters of limited-edition marketing. There are not only separate duck-stamp issues for hunters and collectors, but there are now "governor's edition" duck stamps - hand-signed by state governors in very limited editions and sold on a first-come, first-served basis. Governor John Sununu of New Hampshire was the first to issue signed limited editions - 400 stamps in 1987. They had a hefty face value of \$50 and are listed by Mr



Wells at £357, based on prices in the Scott catalogue. The following year the governor signed only 200, now listed by Mr Wells at £841.

Like postage stamps, duck stamps have their top-price rarities. The inadvertent destruction in 1972 of most of California's duck stamps destined for collectors has made them the most valuable state duck stamp, priced by Mr Wells at £2,079.

There is also a burgeoning market for American artist-signed stamps, ranging in price from \$25 to \$3,000, and for artist-signed prints of the original artwork, \$20-\$500. The monochrome print of the first federal duck stamp of 1934 - mallards in flight by J.N. Darling - changes hands for about \$6,000.

The record-price of \$9,000 for a duck stamp is one of a separate category issued by American Indian reservations. It was the first issued

by the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, showing Canada geese and with a face value of \$30, that was hardly noticed at the time.

Stanley Gibbons has a stock of federal duck stamps from 1985 priced from £10 to £24. A random tour of Mr Wells's price list shows the first 1934 federal stamp at £357 mint, £76 used; that is, signed by the hunter who bought it, £6.10 mint for the first Alabama stamp of 1979, £130.50 for the first Florida stamp of the same year and £2 for a Leech Lake Indian reservation stamp of 50 cents face value. He offers selections of 10 different ones for £25.75 and 100 for £35.

Ben Hebbert, Stanley Gibbons's thematic specialist, points out that birds are a popular specialist theme among collectors and that they have cross-over value, appealing also to collectors of American stamps.

Their collectability is also enhanced by their relatively high face value and their scarcity - issues usually number less than 2 per cent of the 50m-100m for postage stamps - and by the current popularity of wildlife art at auction.

The latest British issue, showing a pair of long-tailed ducks flying past the historic Essex port of Maldon by the marine painter and bird-book illustrator Keith Shackleton, combines bird, marine and topographical appeal. It's a fiver well spent. One for the pot, you might say.

British new-issue duck stamps are £5 (plus postage stamp) from: Sales, The British Association for Shooting and Conservation, Marford Mill, Rosssett, Wrexham LL12 0HL (01244-573000). John Wells: PO Box 222, Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire EN8 8GS (01992-628976).

To opt in or out - that is the question

Should you switch from state to private pensions? By Iain Morse

STAKEHOLDER PENSIONS, personal pensions, occupational pensions, AVCs - the lexicon of retirement planning is full to the brim with different types of schemes designed to ensure we live our final years in dignity.

As if that were not enough, there is also the question of Serps, the state earnings-related pension scheme available to all wage-earners courtesy of the Government. The real conundrum we face, however, is whether to belong to the scheme at all or simply accept a bribe, payable into a personal pension, to opt out of Serps altogether.

Serps is the additional state pension built up when an employee's Class 1 National Insurance Contributions are paid by an employer. First introduced in 1978, this pension is based on how much a person earns. Not all earnings are taken into account - only those between the lower earnings limit of £54 per week and the upper limit of £485.

The formula for entitlement is complex but depends on the average of these earnings over a person's whole working life. At present, the maximum Serps pension is about 21 per cent of eligible earnings, or around 25,000 a year.

The purchasing power of this supplement to the basic state pension is increased in line with earnings inflation up to an individual's retirement age, then increases in line with price inflation once it is being paid.

This sounds like good value, but says Steven Cameron, pensions development manager at Scottish Equitable: "Successive governments keep moving the goal posts on the final benefit to be actually paid." Estimates vary, but by 2050 the maximum real value of a Serps pension may fall from 21 to just 12 per cent of average earnings for a man retiring at age 65.

Contracting out of Serps has

been optional since 1998. If you choose to contract out, the Government still collects National Insurance Contributions from your salary, but rebates these into a personal pension chosen by you. However, experts warn that it does not always make sense to opt out. Doing so depends on a complicated calculation based on a person's age and the scale of the rebate. "Deciding whether to contract in or out has never been harder," says Andrew Black, marketing manager of Standard Life. "Decisions like this should not be marginal, but clear cut."

When first introduced, so-called "contracted-out rebates" were the same regardless of age, with a 2 per cent bonus for those who opted out. This made leaving Serps a better deal for the young than the old. Most of us were advised to contract out up to the age of 45, and only then to consider contracting back in.

In April last year, a new system was introduced, that involved paying higher levels of rebate to a contracted-out pension as you grow older. For the tax year 1999-2000, rebates now run from 3.4 per cent of earnings for a man or woman aged 16, up to 9 per cent for one aged 46 and above.

"This was a radical change," says Mr Black, "which moved the real value of rebates far closer to the value of Serps, if you had chosen to pay it instead. This alone made the decision to contract out more marginal."

Then came the abolition of Advanced Corporation Tax (ACT) relief, which effectively reduced the income yield from UK equities held in pension funds by 20 per cent.

"Because this applies only to UK equities, not gilts or Euro-

pean equities, its effects can be over-estimated," believes Mr Black. "But the fact remains that it will reduce growth on pension funds and therefore on the returns of contracted-out arrangements."

Estimates vary with pension providers arguing this could result in a reduction in growth of up to 1 per cent a year. The Government Actuary disagrees, putting the figure at 0.25 per cent. "The effect of this is to reduce benefits, because the costs of running these schemes remain quite high," argues Mr Cameron.

This means that there will be a benefit shortfall for the current tax year. It is also possible to contract in or out of Serps in each current tax year, and the decision can be made at any time until 5 April.

Mr Cameron agrees that "in theory it might be worth contracting back into Serps for the current tax year, but the possible benefits are very small - we're talking some tens of pounds, not hundreds. When rebates increase in 1999, contracting out will become just viable."

The real issue is whether Serps will survive. If future governments move the goal posts yet again, then having your rebates paid into a contracted-out plan of your own - which can't be touched - could look like a very good idea."

There are several ways of contracting out and building alternative provision. If you joined a contracted-out final salary scheme, where a pension is linked to income and years spent at the firm, then rebates paid up to 5 April 1997 will entitle you to a guaranteed minimum pension (GMP) at least equal to the foregone Serps entitlement.

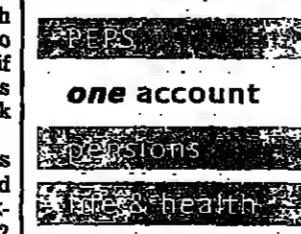
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- (a) The Wizard of Oz
- (b) Mystic Meg
- (c) Your bank manager
- (d) You

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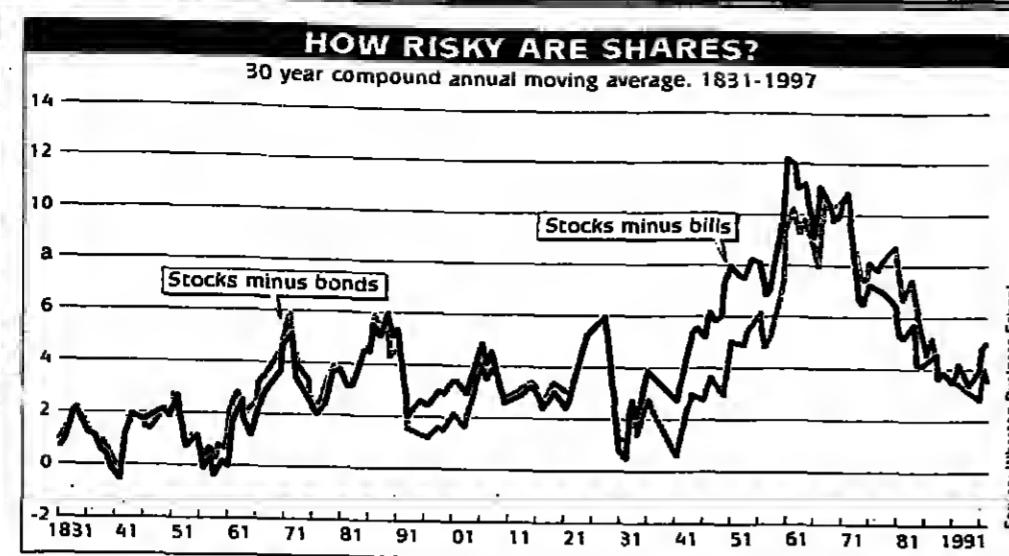
The Global Investor site also has a Financial Book Forum, covering books on finance and investment, and a Financial Book Exchange, best described as an Internet swapmeet.

The aim of the exchange is to provide a forum where people can swap or barter financial books. The exchange is completely free, and has full search and monitor facilities in common with the site's other forums.

Global Investor's core business is as a specialist financial bookshop on the Web. Providing such a forum to allow potential clients to "trade" among themselves might seem counter-productive. However, if you cannot find the book you want on the Financial Book Exchange, Global Investor is betting that you will turn to its "normal" on-line store.

As well as the bookshop, the Global Investor site also includes a directory of financial websites and services, market reports on the world's major stock markets, a complete listing of international ADRs issued in the US, with the facility to create a customised ADR portfolio monitor, and a news service dedicated to the latest developments in finance and technology.

Asia Crisis Homepage: www.stern.nyu.edu/~nroubini/asia/AsiaHomepage.html
Global Investor Forum: www.global-investor.com/forums



Solving the equity premium puzzle

THE ACADEMIC community has been puzzling over the issue, so it says, since 1985. Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the Federal Reserve, has been worried about it for at least two years now (and returned to the subject again this week). The Economist magazine devoted three pages to analysing the subject only last week. Most people haven't a clue what the fuss is all about, since it all seems pretty obvious to anyone with any common sense. So who is right about the so-called equity premium puzzle?

Just in case you have missed this important-sounding debate, let me define a few terms. The equity premium is the fancy phrase that finance theorists dreamt up some years ago to explain the fact that investors require higher returns from shares than they do from "less risky" assets such as Treasury bills. The premium measures the difference between the returns you can expect to generate from the stock market over time and those you can expect to generate from buying a Government bond.

Thus if a short-term Government bond is currently priced to yield 6 per cent, and the stock market is offering expected returns of, say, 9 per cent per annum, the "equity premium" is said to be 3 per cent. That is the price you are effectively being paid for taking on the extra risk you incur in buying shares. The risk in this context comes from the fact that shares go up and down a lot more, and carry more credit risk than a bond issued by the Government. (Note that all returns in this debate are assumed to be in real terms - that is, after taking account of inflation.)

Now, if you are with me so far, you may have guessed by now that "the puzzle" is why the equity premium, as measured by the returns actually generated by the financial markets over the years, won't stand still. In fact, as the chart shows, the difference between the real returns produced by the stock market and those offered by government bonds have jumped very sharply in the post-war period.

The equity premium reached a peak in the 1960s and early 1970s at about 12 per cent, but since then it has fallen quite significantly. It is now back to levels not seen since



THE JONATHAN DAVIS COLUMN

the pre-war period (when neither the risks nor potential rewards of equity ownership were anything like as well documented as they are now, and a proper analytical framework for understanding investments was still in its infancy).

What has been puzzling the academic community since it first latched on to this issue some 13 years ago is why there has been such a dramatic shift in the risk that investors perceive in the stock market. Originally, the puzzle was why the equity premium had risen so high. Now the debate has turned on its head, and with the stock markets on both sides of the Atlantic at such heady levels (at least before this week's Greenspan-inspired wobble), the question has become not whether the premium is too high, but whether it is now too low when measured against the actual risks of investing in bonds and equities.

This is important for anyone interested in assessing the current valuation of the world stock markets. If investors are right to think that the risk of holding shares has fallen dramatically, then it becomes easier (though still not that easy) to justify the market at today's stratospheric levels. If, on the other hand, investors have simply become too blasé about the risks of the stock market, it implies that they could soon be in for a rude awakening.

As *The Economist* pointed out last week, the difference between assuming an equity risk premium of, say, 1 per cent and 6 per cent makes a huge difference to how fast and how long company profits have to keep on growing to justify current share prices. It could be the difference between companies growing their profits at 5 per cent and 10 per cent a year in real terms for the foreseeable future.

ture - a huge difference in practice. The first is very feasible, the latter virtually impossible.

There is no doubt which camp Mr Greenspan is inclined towards. While at pains to emphasise that economic conditions in the United States are as good as he can remember, he has also been at pains for some time to point out the risks of investors assuming that the current "virtuous circle" of low inflation and rapid sustained growth in company profits can endure forever. As he told Congress in his testimony last week: "In recent years, continued low product price inflation and expectations that it will persist have promoted stability in financial markets and fostered perceptions that the degree of risk in the financial outlook has been moving ever lower."

"To a considerable extent, investors seem to be expecting that low inflation and stronger productivity growth will allow the extraordinary growth of profits to be extended into the distant future. These rising expectations have in turn driven stock prices sharply higher and credit spreads lower, perhaps in both cases to levels that will be difficult to sustain, unless the virtuous cycle continues." (You must allow for the fact that no central banker is ever going to be caught making an entirely unequivocal statement - hence the "perhaps".)

Back in the real world, of course, the "equity premium puzzle" is not quite as puzzling as the academics would have us believe. The one thing we know about markets is that in the long run they follow predictable and remarkably consistent paths, but in the short term they can behave in very irrational ways. Like any crowd, investors do swing from moods of great enthusiasm to ones of great apprehension.

At the moment everything in the sky is blue, just as everything in the 1970s looked dire and foreboding. By definition, most risks are unforeseeable - but it does not mean they are not there. The real puzzle will be if markets collectively did not go from one extreme to another. Historically, over long periods of time equities have consistently produced returns of 6 per cent to 7 per cent in real terms, which is about 3 to 4 per cent more than cash or government bonds. But most investors today, as Mr Greenspan reminds us, are betting that the future will go on being a lot better than the past for a long time.

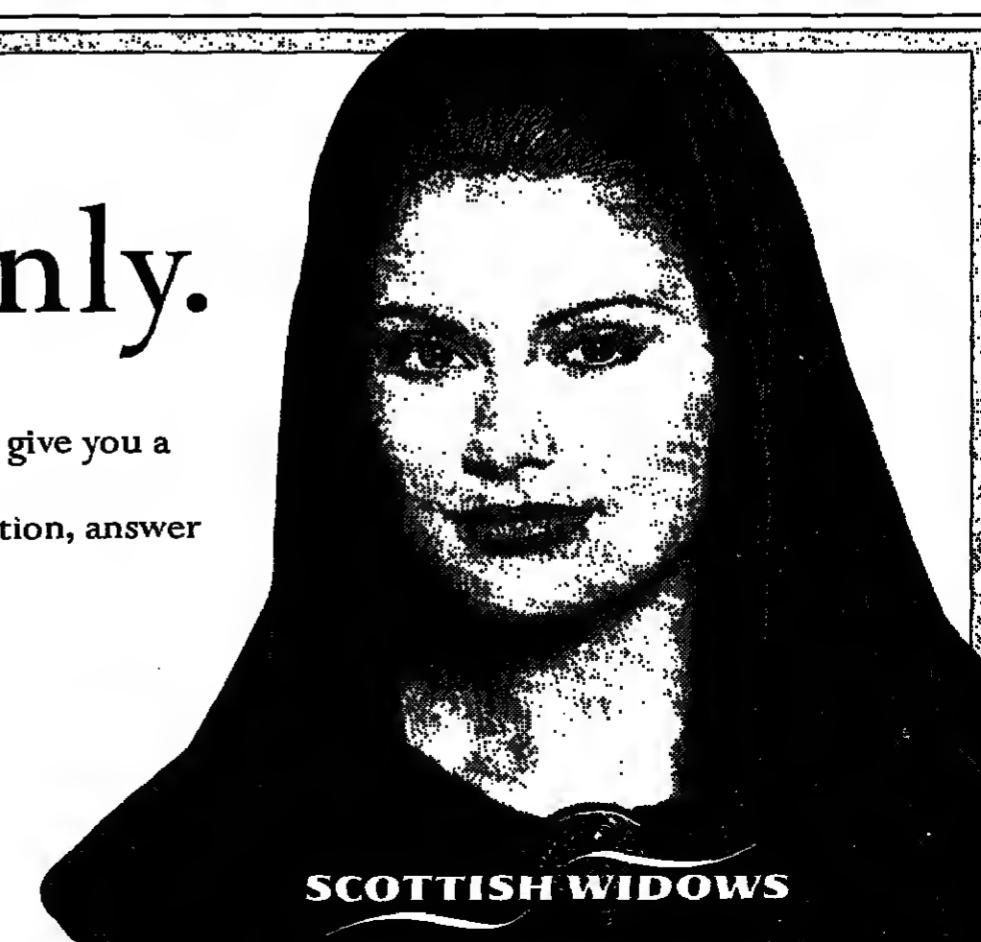
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Live and plan your finances together

Couples sharing a home should do their sums, says Andy Couchman

LIVING WITH a partner is the first life stage where a key element of financial planning is protecting others. It is also the time when, for many, long-term planning takes on a greater significance and when retirement planning is best started.

The first priority for most young couples is finding somewhere to live. At the height of the property boom in the mid-80s everyone, it seemed, was anxious to get on the property ladder. Many learned their cost that what goes up may well not stay up and negative equity or owing more on a mortgage than the property was worth became part of our everyday vocabulary.

In the more cautious 90s many couples prefer to rent a property first. Then, building up capital that is quickly accessible will be the priority. C&G offers one of the best rates, paying 7.5 per cent on savings of £2,500, on its Instant Transfer phone account according to Money Facts which offers a daily updated faxback listing of top savings and mortgage rates. To access, just pick up the handset on a fax machine, dial the number and follow the automated voice instructions.

If buying, and two thirds of people now do this - the highest rate in Europe - which mortgage and which mortgage funding vehicle are both big decisions. One option is to pay interest only and have a mortgage endowment or PEP to repay the mortgage. Those with a

pension plan could pay off the mortgage from their cash lump sum when they retire. An endowment is the simplest route because life assurance and critical illness cover can be built in whereas the others require separate life assurance.

A cheaper and arguably better bet is a capital and interest loan where the mortgage debt gradually reduces, usually being paid off over 25 years. The downside is not getting a lump sum at the end of the mortgage. According to the Council of Mortgage Lenders, 41 per cent of first time buyers now choose this route. Endowments come second, with 34 per cent, but have decreased in popularity as with profit bonds rates have fallen, reflecting lower investment returns and interest rates.

Around one in three borrowers adds mortgage payment protection insurance, typically costing around £5-7 a month per £100 of monthly mortgage payment. This protects mortgage payments against unemployment, illness or disability - but usually only up to a year.

When it comes to borrowing money, the general rule is that the more you can put down the better, particularly now that many lenders do not charge a mortgage indemnity guarantee (MIG) premium if you borrow less than 95 per cent of the value of your property. Some lenders will offer up to 102 per cent of the property value according to Andy Young, director of Esprit Mortgage

Network, which only operates through independent financial advisers. That could help towards legal fees and stamp duty.

"Many high street lenders will no longer offer 100 per cent mortgages but secondary lenders such as Mortgage Express (part of Bradford & Bingley) and Verso (part of Britannia) offer good value for money. Rates are around 8.75-8.95 per cent currently but 100 per cent borrowers usually lose out on the discounts, cashback and fixed interest rates offered by other lenders," says Andy Young.

The MIG could cost up to 12 per cent of the amount borrowed above 75 per cent of the property value, so on a 100 per cent mortgage on a flat costing £65,000 that would be £1,800. MIGs give no benefit to the borrower, only indemnifying the lender against the risk of default - another reason to avoid it if possible.

"You can generally borrow up to 3.25 times your income or 2.75 times your joint income but do make sure that you can afford the repayments, even if interest rates rise," warns Andy Young.

Life assurance is one of the few types of insurance that has actually gone down in recent times. One of the latest to cut its rates - by up to a third - is Canada Life. Diana Harding, manager for protection, says that £100,000 of mortgage protection for 25 years now costs just £7.50 a month for a 25 year old man,

provided he does not smoke. A woman five years older would pay just 30p a month more.

As well as life cover, critical illness, which provides a cash lump sum on suffering a serious illness, and income protection, which provides an income if you cannot work due to long term illness or disability can be valuable as can private medical insurance if the budget can afford it.

This is also a good time to start a pension. For many, this will be through their employer's scheme but if that is not available, or they are self-employed, a personal pension not only builds up a fund for the future but attracts tax relief too.

A final but often overlooked element of financial planning is writing a will and considering an enduring power of attorney. Both will typically cost less than £100 and may be offered by the solicitor looking after the conveyancing on buying that first home.

MoneyFacts Savings Selection: 0336 400238; Mortgage Selection: 0336 400239 (faxback calls cost 50p a minute at all times, typically around £1 in total); C&G: 0800 742437; Canada Life: 01707 651122. For a list of independent financial advisers near you call IFA Portfolio on 0117 971 1177.

Andy Couchman is publishing editor of *HealthCare Insurance Report*

Free crisps are not enough

Firms now offer fringe benefits to loyal investors. By Guy Dennis



FIVE OF THE BEST

Whitbread: Coupons with the annual report in May give a discount of 10-15 per cent at Cafe Rouge, TGI Friday's, Thresher and Marriott leisure and golf breaks.

Next: A 25 per cent discount voucher is issued with the annual report in April to shareholders with a minimum of 500 shares. Recipients can use the discount on as many items as they like purchased in one visit.

using the guides, if they want to be sure of reaping the rewards.

Peter Hargreaves: Managing director of Hargreaves Lansdown, advises most investors to register shares in their own name. But even if shares are registered in your name, the onus is on you to look for the perks. Investors should check,

Ladbrooke Group: A range of discounts are offered on Hilton Hotels, including 10 per cent off published room tariffs and 10 per cent off food and drinks.

Debenhams: Shareholders with at least 2,000 shares get a 12.5 per cent discount on purchases worth up to £5,000 per year.

Gieves Group: Investors with a minimum of 600 shares get a 20 per cent discount on clothing and shoes.

packet of salt and vinegar can justify a trek to the meeting.

Some so-called perks could actually cost you more than they are worth. British Airways gives shareholders a coupon giving them and up to three family members a 10 per cent discount off the published

price of any BA flight. But competitive travel agents offer far greater discounts on flights than this.

Also, although perks play a role, shares should always be bought on the basis of solid financial performance.

Restrictions on perks do much to limit their appeal and practical value. Many companies require investors to hold a minimum number of shares to qualify for benefits. In one sense this is a drawback, but at the same time the benefits offered tend to reflect the minimum number of shares required; more shares as a minimum often means more benefit.

Another common restriction means that shareholder benefits cannot be used in conjunction with other discounts, such as sales and special offers. This might be expected, but these other discounts may sometimes be worth more than any perk.

Perks change over time and may only be issued at certain times of the year. For example, discounts issued in the form of money-off vouchers are often only distributed once a year with the annual report, so you would have to be a shareholder at the right time in order to benefit. And you may have to hold shares for a minimum period of time to qualify.

'Attractive Perks for UK Shareholders', from Hargreaves Lansdown, costs £3, but readers of 'The Independent' can obtain a free copy by calling 0800 550 861. 'Shareholder Benefits', from Barclays Stockbrokers, can be obtained free by calling 0345 777 400

Travel insurers wage war on fraud

Holiday claim cheats are coming under greater scrutiny, writes Vicky Trapmore

Precariously balanced on a log crossing a rapidly flowing river in the jungle, Dave slipped. He managed to catch hold of the log, but his bag ripped as he fell and his passport, wallet and plane tickets fell into the rushing water below. He managed to get to dry land, but had no hope of retrieving his dropped items.

Sounds improbable? Every year, travel insurance companies deal with millions of claims which range from the ordinary to the somewhat implausible, like Dave's situation - which is in fact true. It is down to the insurance company to trust the claimant, and the claimant to provide as much evidence as possible to back up their story. Sadly, many people use this as an opportunity to commit fraud.

In 1997, fraudsters cost insurance companies around £50m. The flipside of all those freebies is that insurance premiums increase in order to cover the costs. The honest traveller ends up shelling out because some holidaymakers cheat the system.

This year, the Association of British Insurers (ABI), which represents the industry, is spearheading a crackdown on fraud. Travellers who report items as allegedly stolen can expect to have their hotel rooms searched, and to be severely reprimanded if "lost" or "stolen" items are found, says Tony Baker, the ABI's deputy director general.

Potential fraudsters should beware - an internal database shared between all insurers means that each claim is carefully checked to ensure it has not already been made on another policy. A traveller was discovered and convicted for falsely claiming the loss of 33 suitcases over three years. The cases had "disappeared" from planes, trains, ferries and motorway service areas. The common feature was that each suitcase contained scuba diving gear.

Despite its increased toughness against suspected fraudsters, the industry denies suggestions from



some travellers that it deliberately rejects claims on its policies. In 1997, an estimated half a million people returned from holiday and made claims on their travel insurance. The rejection rate is low. Thomas Cook claims it examines barely 1 per cent of claims on its policies.

But some customers do still find their legitimate claims rejected. One reason is that the claimant is unfamiliar with the details of the insurance policy. Suzanne Moore of ABI has the following advice for travellers: "It is important to be clear about what you are buying when you buy it." Take time to read the small print, and make sure you are aware of the extent of the cover you are buying. Do not hesitate to question your insurance company about anything that is unclear.

Ms Moore adds: "The person

selling the cover has a responsibility to tell you what the conditions are, so that you are aware of possible limitations." More adventurous sports such as bungee jumping, for example, are not covered on many standard policies.

If you are planning to do anything more energetic on holiday than lie on the beach, check with your insurer to verify that you are covered. Picking up a jet-ski for an experimental ride could cost your holiday money in medical bills if something goes wrong: the sport is considered "adventurous" and is not covered under some policies. Winter sports, however, require additional insurance.

Arrange your insurance as far in advance of your holiday as possible. Many policies will refund the cost of the holiday in the event of something happening to prevent you from

going on holiday. This could be a death in the family, job loss or even jury service.

The medical conditions side of travel insurance is another potential problem area. Many standard policies will not cover people with pre-existing medical conditions, or those who have been under medical treatment in the 90-day period prior to the holiday. If you are going abroad for convalescence purposes, the medical part of your insurance is nullified.

There are, however, policies that offer cover for these situations.

Mike Williams, of the British Insurance and Investment Brokers Association (Biba), recommends getting insurance from a broker. "It is important to shop around for travel insurance policies. Not only are there enormous differences in

price, but a broker will find a policy tailor-made to suit the customer's requirements. Issues such as age limitations and medical conditions are often overlooked."

When making a claim, it is important to have as much documentation as possible to support it as insufficient evidence could lead to it being rejected. Instructions will be in the policy documentation - make sure you take this with you. Try not to exaggerate the claim; insurance companies treat them as fraudulent.

One reason why claims are sometimes rejected is on the grounds that claimants did not take reasonable care of their items. Running around the beach filming your friends with an expensive camcorder, and then "hiding" it under a towel, when you all go for a dip in the sea, is not considered "reasonable care". Leaving items in cars can also be tricky, and many insurance policies stipulate that items must be locked in the boot or hidden from view under a top cover in an estate or a hatchback. The glove compartment is not considered safe.

Another area to remember is claims excesses. They exist to keep down the cost of the premium, and to ensure that claims are serious. When making a claim you may be charged one excess for every section of the policy that you claim for. For example, claiming for a stolen bag that contained money and a camera could induce excess charges for the baggage claim, the valuables claim and the cash and personal money claim. Some brokers' policies, however, promise to charge only one excess fee per claim.

WHAT YOU NEED TO MAKE A CLAIM

IF YOU do need to make a claim, remember that the more documented evidence you can provide, the more likely your claim is to be met.

- Take a copy of the policy on holiday to refer to for claims, information and emergency phone numbers.
- Keep a copy of all receipts and relevant documents.
- To cancel your holiday before going owing to illness, get a doctor's certificate as proof.
- In the event of a medical emergency abroad, contact the insurance company as soon as possible, and keep all relevant documents including receipts for anything you have paid for up front, so you will be able to prove what happened.
- If your luggage is stolen, report it within 24 hours, and get a police report. This must be written - a crime reference number is not necessarily enough.
- Keep all receipts for purchases made to replace those items you have lost or had stolen.
- If your luggage is delayed or lost in transit, the carrier should supply a "property irregularity report".
- If you lose your passport, contact the British Consulate.
- If an accident involves you, do not pay for anything or accept responsibility until you have contacted your insurer. Again, get a police report and getting statements from any witnesses present is also a good idea.

The dispute resolver

If a claim is rejected, go to the Ombudsman. By Guy Dennis

AS INSURANCE companies become ever more wary of fraud, it can be difficult for people to get genuine claims accepted.

In this area of potentially unresolved conflict, it is the job of the insurance Ombudsman to try and steer in the direction of justice when disputes arise. Yet while it makes sense to look for insurance companies covered by the Ombudsman, and most UK insurers are now members of the scheme, few people know what it does or how it works.

Using the Ombudsman to settle a dispute is a much more attractive proposition than costly legal battles. Among the disputes the Ombudsman is called to resolve, travel insurance claims are among the highest in number.

Travel insurance, a complex product, is often sold by travel agents who know little about insurance. Problems may also crop up when travel insurance cover overlaps with existing insurance, such as home contents policies that already protect an individual's possessions. In addition, there are many

variations between different travel policies.

The stated aim of the Insurance Ombudsman Bureau (IOB) is to "provide an independent and impartial method of resolving certain disputes between insurers and individual policy holders". In practical terms, if your insurance claim is rejected then you can call on the Ombudsman to propose a solution.

The Ombudsman's decisions are not legally binding and they can be rejected, but this is very unlikely on the insurers' part. No insurance company has ever rejected the verdict of the Ombudsman, although in the past they have tried to use the courts to limit his powers.

In the case of consumers, their seemingly-justified claims can still be rejected, although to some extent this is inevitable. There will be people who have claims rejected because they have not understood the terms of their insurance - quite simply,

cases where its decisions have been rejected by members of the public who have then received a more favourable outcome from the courts. And it also stresses its independence, saying this is guaranteed by its council, which represents relevant bodies such as the Consumers Association.

Michael Lovegrove at the IOB says the Ombudsman can even provide reasonable decisions where the law seems unfair. "The Ombudsman may conclude that the strict legal position is that the claim fails, but we sometimes stand back from that and say well look, that may be the strict legal position but the result wouldn't be fair."

Don't forget, in the event of a dispute, you have nothing to lose by calling on the Ombudsman. The service is free, and for the really determined the courts are still available.

Insurance Ombudsman Bureau: 0845 600 6666. Booklet "How can the Insurance Ombudsman Bureau help me?", giving practical advice about its services, is available from the same number.

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Welcome to used car country

August and September will be good months to buy second-hand cars, as the annual registration change means that forecourts are flooded with traded-in models. These are 10 of the best buys. By James Ruppert

Car dealers everywhere will be choking back the tears this 1 August. It will be the last time that the registration prefix will be changed annually before a biannual and then an all-new system is introduced for the millennium.

At the moment, nobody knows how this will affect used car values. For the next few months, though, as hundreds of drivers collect their brand new S-registration vehicles, it will be business as usual.

That means hundreds of thousands of part-exchanges cluttering up forecourts and auctions and used car values dipping even lower. As ever, August and September look like great months to buy and here are 10 used cars we think you should be taking a closer look at.

Fiat Cinquecento

Small cars are all the rage at the moment, but when the Polish-built Fiat Cinquecento was launched in 1993, its only mass market rival was the Mini. By comparison, the Fiat is much more comfortable, with a practical hatchback, remarkable 50mpg economy and useful amounts of performance, especially the Sporting model, and real personality. It was recently replaced by the Fiat Seicento. Prices for the older model are set to drop further. Early examples can be bought for £1,500, though £3,000 secures some tidy 1995 and 1996 models. The trim is flimsy and some owners may have skipped service schedules.

Citroen ZX

Recently replaced by the new Xsara, the old ZX may have boring styling, but it was never less than great to drive and hugely practical to own. Performance from the smallest 1.4 litre is brisk, while the ride and handling is superb for a car in the medium hatchback class. For many owners, the turbo diesel engine is the best option, being flexible, fast and returning great mpg figures. The fact is that Citroen dealers do not want ZXs any more and prices have never been lower. You can pay just over £2,000 for a high mileage 1.4 litre. Tidy 1995 models are no more than £4,000.

Ford Mondeo

In the family saloon and hatchback sector, Ford proved its pre-eminence with the highly-accomplished Mondeo, introduced in 1993. A facelift and revamp in 1996 made it even better. All Mondeos are spacious, fun to drive and very durable. Running costs are reassuringly low too. At this time of year lots are released from company fleets and there is a large oversupply of nearly-new examples under a year old. No one ever made a mistake by investing in a Mondeo. Early examples now cost around £3,000. The 1996 models start at £7,000. The choice is huge, so there is no need to feel rushed.



Vauxhall Omega: the best equipment, space and driving enjoyment this side of a BMW 5 series

Vauxhall Omega

Badge snobbery in the company car park means that many turn their noses up at the Omega, which offers the best equipment, space and driving enjoyment this side of a BMW 5 series. It will cover six-figure mileages with ease and has acres of interior space. Best of all, this fleet market executive depreciates like stone. High mileage, 1994, 2.0 litre saloon versions cost less than £5,000 and estates maybe £500 more. A very well-equipped CD model starts at just over £7,000, while 2.5 litre V6s, which in CD form cost £22,500 in 1995, will now cost just over £9,000.

Ford Galaxy

Over the past three years, the choice of people carriers has multiplied more than fourfold. One of

the best, because of its car-like driving qualities, is the Ford Galaxy. Although you can also buy it badged as a VW Sharan, or Seat Alhambra on the used market, the huge numbers of Fords in circulation has meant that prices and demand for the Ford-branded version has softened, so there are bargains to be had, especially the highly equipped Ghia and Ghia X versions. Two litre versions with high mileages cost around £8,000, rising to around £20,000 for a thirsty V6 or frugal diesel.

Nissan Terrano

The 4x4 market has become the latest fashion victim. As buyers downsize to lifestyle estates and MPVs, the old dinosaurs start to clutter up the used market. While Land Rover

Discoveries and Vauxhall Fronters are best avoided, the more reasonably sized and easy-to-drive Nissan Terrano now makes even more sense. This is especially so if you do plan to go off-road, or tow something. Also badged as a Ford Maverick, the Nissan is comfortable to drive on the road with plenty of space inside, although the three-door is a bit tight for luggage space. Prices start at £7,000 for a 1993 model rising to around £12,000 for a 1996 diesel.

Mercedes S Class

Although all Mercedes make sound used buys because of their durability and easy re-sale, rarely are they bargains. Well, the huge and hugely competent limousine which sold poorly can now be picked up for what

is, in Mercedes terms, a song. These comfortable and capable cars out-point most of their rivals. Although 1990 examples for under £4,000. Better, though, to consider an air-bagged 1993 16 valve model at £6,500. Also worth considering is the bargain turbo model, which also has four-wheel drive and costs just over £9,000 for a 1994 example.

Vauxhall Calibra

As coupé buyers are currently flocking to buy cheap Japanese imports, many are forgetting about the competent home market coupes like the Calibra. Although based on an old Cavalier, that is no bad thing because the now-discontinued model is tough, reliable, easy to drive and

cheap to run. Values have been dropping after the last few months and it is now possible to buy early 1990 examples for under £4,000. Better, though, to consider an air-bagged 1993 16 valve model at £6,500. Also worth considering is the bargain turbo model, which also has four-wheel drive and costs just over £10,000.

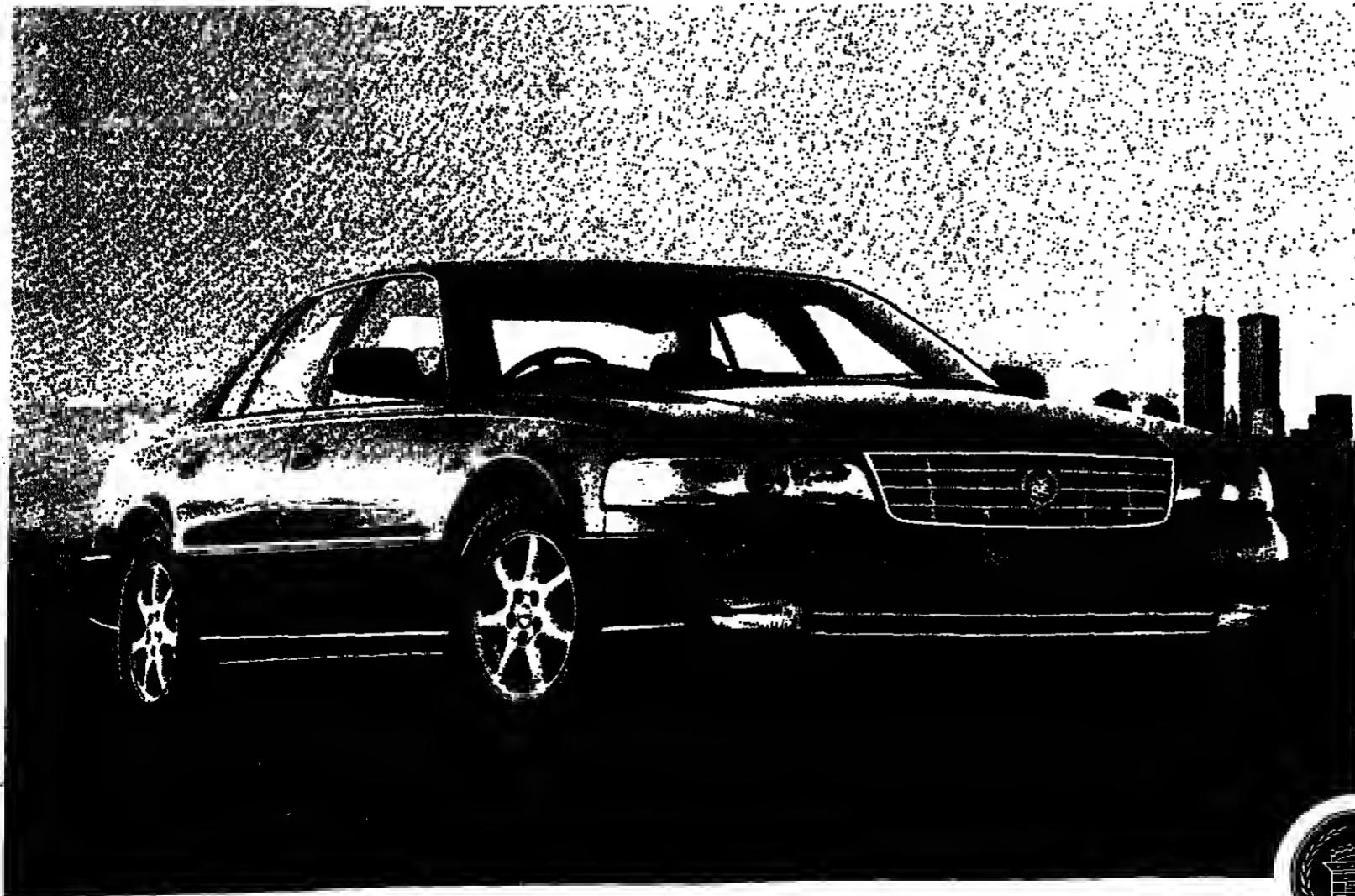
Andi A4

For a long time, the BMW 3 series was unchallenged in the compact executive market – until the Audi came up with the A4. While the 3 series, which is replace this autumn, refuses to depreciate, A4s, particularly low-specification ex-company examples, are now around in large numbers. Prices start at around £3,000 for a high-mileage 1995 1.6 litre, while a turbo Sport will be just over £11,000 and a silky 2.6 litre just over £10,000.

Nissan Primera Estate

Few middle market cars have been as nice to drive or as well built as the old model Primera. In particular, the crisp 2.0 litre engines offered plenty of power and they never felt anything less than totally solid. Those are qualities you particularly need in an estate car and the overlooked Primera version is rugged, spacious and will last as long as you want it to. It is also undervalued. Prices start at just over £3,000 and just a few hundred needs to be added for the top of the range SLX. A facelifted and air-bagged 1995 model which cost £15,000 new, now costs little more than £6,500 after having covered 50,000 miles.

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With
retirement
looming, many
are turning to
property as a
long-term
investment.
Mary Wilson
reports

With the current uncertainty about pension funds and equities, a number of people are taking the view that bricks and mortar is the safest option for their pension.

"People buying property to provide their pension is something which seems to be quite common place now," says Jonathan Vandermolen, of Blenheim Bishop, a London agent.

"They are turning to property because they reckon the stock market has peaked and that is where many pension funds put their money. With property, people have control over their own destiny and residential property is currently the flavour of the month. Fifty per cent of new developments, which we sell, go as investment."

At one of the developments Mr Vandermolen is marketing, Kensington Garden Lodge in London's Queen's Way, which has valuable underground parking. 12 out of 18 apartments have sold to investors. "All the one-bedders, which give a higher return, went quickly and we only have eight two-bedroom flats left," he says. "These sell from £275,000 and the yield should be 10 per cent gross."

"If you are thinking long term, then the most important thing is that the property is close to transport, in a well established prime area and one where a tenant can pop out to get a pint of milk or his daily paper."

The Buy-to-Let scheme, launched in 1997 by Aria, the Association of Residential Letting Agents, has encouraged many individuals into the investment market. This has, so far, enabled 8,000 properties to be bought in the private rented sector with mortgages totalling £133.5m being taken out during January to May 1998. Seven lenders are now on the panel, offering a wide range of mortgages.

The City Quay, developed by Taylor Woodrow Capital Developments, is another example of where investors are buying. This is situated beside St Katherine's Dock, just by Tower Bridge in London. Although the site is not yet finished, rental activity is particularly high and rents of £400 per week on a one-bedroom apartment and £600 a week on a two-bedroom apartment are typical.

"These rental rates are higher than average for the area," says Matthew Wilkins, of FPD Savills, which is letting the apartments at a reduced fee of 9 per cent. "This can be attributed to a combination of



Rents of £400 a week for a one-bedroom flat are typical at the City Quay, next to St Katherine's Dock, in London.

A nice little earner when you're 64

locality, quality and specification. It has a waterside aspect and each apartment is highly specified with state-of-the-art facilities and fantastic views."

Anyone buying here should not only see the capital value of their property rise, he believes, but achieve a good income, too.

"About 20 per cent have been bought for investment," says Sam Chapman, who is head of marketing at Taylor Woodrow.

"A number of people have bought for their own use later on, but are renting them out now. Many would not have bought if the investment potential wasn't so great."

Prices range from £230,000 for a one-bedroom apartment, to £710,000 for a penthouse.

At Regallian's recently launched Point West development on the Cromwell Road, London SW7, of the

188 sold, the majority of buyers have been investors. There will be a 70,000 sq ft David Lloyd leisure centre on three floors, to which residents will have a right to membership and a discount on fees.

"I expect that a two-bedroom apartment will see an 8.5 per cent gross return, with the smaller flats getting 10 per cent," says Jonathan Holman, sales director. Prices for the two-bedroom apartment, currently released, range from £299,000 to £250,000, and there will be more one- to four-bedroom flats launched later in the year.

Kim O'Brien has been buying small flats as an investment for the last 12 years and she has just bought two one-bedroom studios at Point West. "Small units are the best. You get a higher yield and because you let them to single professional people, the wear and tear is less."

Kim O'Brien has been buying small flats as an investment for the last 12 years and she has just bought two one-bedroom studios at Point West. "Small units are the best. You get a higher yield and because you let them to single professional people, the wear and tear is less."

"I am not surprised that the returns on investment are so high, because the scheme is close to London and in a secluded location," says Mandie Whelan, sales manager for Charles Church South East.

At another of the company's developments of flats, in Camberley, Surrey, Bob and Joy Lucas have bought a two-bedroom apartment. "I look at it as a boost to my income when I retire," says Mr Lucas. "I am 53 years old and am looking for early retirement. I particularly like these

apartments because they are attractive, built to a high standard and in a good position for the rental market – in the town centre, perfect for professional people."

"I bought the flat for £27,000 and expect to get around £775 a month, which is not too far off 10 per cent, less tax and so on. The local agents tell me they have a list of applicants waiting, so we should have no problem letting it after we complete, probably in December. I am taking a £40,000 buy-to-let mortgage, which will be covered by only half of the rent received. Once the mortgage is paid off that money will be an added source of income to my retirement pension."

Blenheim Bishop, 0171-495 1253; Charles Church, 01276 803080; Aria, 01923 896555; City Quay, 0171-481 9398; Point West, 0171-373 3100.

All mod cons – at a price

New homes are going high-tech. And how. By Mary Wilson

THE HIGH-TECH home where you need only to touch a screen to turn on the lights, alter the room temperature, close the curtains or switch on the hi-fi has arrived.

It has been possible for some years to install Telguard, a magic box of tricks which does all this and also enables you to let people in via your telephone, whether you are in the living room or in an office 50 miles away.

But, until now, the cost has deterred all but those with mobility problems or those who feel they needed exceptionally high levels of security.

Julian Owen, a spokesman for the architects' network ASBA, says: "The problem at the moment is that high-tech gadgetry is very expensive and most people realise they will not get back what they have spent when they sell their home. I think it will happen when technology is more accessible."

However, one enlightened developer is starting to build homes packed full of wizardry. Michael McCarthy, managing director of Mullion Homes, says: "I aim to build quality 'intelligent' housing which will appeal to people 10 to 15 years away from retirement."

"It is our goal to produce very modern, flexible houses which will be stylish and sophisticated with a full range of automation."

"Garage doors which open when they recognise your car are a fun gimmick for a 10-year-old, but incredibly useful should you become disabled when older."

"Similarly, the Home Automation System (HAS), which enables you to turn on the hi-fi at a touch of a screen, would be invaluable for someone with mobility problems."

The HAS has a portable touch screen to operate the television, video, security, lighting, curtains and room temperatures. And in each house there will be a "smart" room which can be used as an office, a guest room (a bed pulls down from the bookshelves) or an art and craft room (there is a sink for cleaning utensils).

The houses will also have a central vacuum cleaning and built-in space cableways for future technology upgrades, a home exchange telephone system and underfloor heating.

Mullion plans three of these developments – two conversions of listed buildings and a new building project. Work is underway at the first of these, The Bury Stud, in Gloucestershire, where six farm buildings will be converted into seven very large two/three bedroom houses. The third room is the smart room.

All this technology does not come cheap: the properties will be priced at £435,000 to £595,000. The next development will be

at Brackley, Northamptonshire, where five large Grade II* listed buildings will be converted into eight homes. Prices will range from £385,000 to £525,000.

The third will be five new steel-and-glass sea-front homes at Lytham, Lancashire.

In the grounds of Hanbury Manor Hotel & Country Club in Hertfordshire, 10 large country houses are being built by Leach Homes. Here, too, traditional looking houses will be fitted with sophisticated gadgetry: at least three phone lines, a central sound system wired to most rooms and a video link in the bedrooms and living rooms.

Security is provided by a closed-circuit television camera above the front door, exterior lights with sensors and photoelectric street lights which come on automatically at dusk.

Two of these five-bedroom houses are for sale at £745,000 and £795,000.

Banner Homes is also putting in a CCTV mini-camera over the front door. This is linked to the television distribution system which allows you to see who is at the door from any television in the house. It can also be used as a baby monitor. The cheaper of two five-bedroom houses at Hatch End, Middlesex, is priced at £615,000 and eight are for sale in Barnet for about £700,000.

Sea House, which was built five years ago overlooking Kinsale Harbour, in southern Ireland, has two computerised gas central heating systems and dual electric supplies to the kitchen and family room to accommodate US and European appliances.

It also has a computerised sprinkler system for the one-acre grounds, three television and radio satellite dishes and a top-of-the-range alarm system. Hamilton Osborne King is selling the three-bedroom house, with two separate cottages, for £151,600.

In London, purchasers at Wimbledon Central, a new development of 68 apartments by Pathfinder, are given electronic key fobs which can be programmed to give access only to certain entrances and for only a limited period. Prices for the remaining two-bedroom apartments start at £234,000.

And at St. Hilda's Wharf a four-bedroom penthouse has been designed with a six-line telephone and intercom system and full-surround sound system. Knight Frank is looking for £745,000.

Mullion Homes, 01285 657576. **Poles Park**, 01920 84460. **Hamilton Osborne King**, 00 553 21 271371. **Wimbledon Central**, 0181 946 9906. **Banner Homes**, 01628 536200. **Knight Frank**, 0171 480 6848.

Home comforts for servants of the church



Spirit level: The Rev David and Mia Hibbom and their children

THE HILBORMS' first home was on a condemned council estate in Birmingham, followed by a Barratt house in the suburbs of Nottingham; now they live in a 1798 end-of-terrace town house in Clerkenwell, at the heart of London's "loft land".

Could this couple be media darlings or City types working their way up the rungs of the property ladder? Not a bit of it. The Rev Mia and Dr David Hibbom share the ministry at the City Temple in Holborn and the house comes with the job. "If we weren't ministers, there's no way we could afford to live here," says David.

In fact, they very nearly didn't. "We spent months exploring the area with the help of a church administrator, but it was quite clear that we weren't going to get much in Islington for the money the church had to spend. The house wasn't in the best state, but we knew it was in a very desirable area and a good investment."

When they moved in three years ago, the four-storey house had been roughly divided into four bedsits by the previous owner. While the house didn't fulfil certain criteria laid down by the United Reformed Church for its manses – for example three or four bedrooms, a dedicated study, two reception rooms and a kitchen large enough for a table – David and Mia could see its potential.

They suggested converting the basement into a kitchen/dining room and re-siting the main bathroom to the first floor where a large living room runs the length of the house. They moved in with relatives while the work was carried out but David kept track of the progress. Modernisation cost the church £16,000. The

house was purchased from central funds for £178,000 and has enjoyed an increase in value in line with the popularity of Clerkenwell.

"Unfortunately, we can't afford the furniture or fittings to show the house to its full potential. It's like getting a really good car but the basic bottom of the range model with none of the accoutrements," adds David. "But it's not what we work for: we're not a *Homes & Gardens* clergy couple."

The house isn't big enough for a proper study so they have one at the church, a 15-minute walk from their home. "It makes the divide between church and home very sharp," says David. "We can't just pop down and play with the kids after writing a sermon." Another consequence of city living is the small split-level patio garden – "just big enough for the children to work off their energy".

Choosing schools for David and Mia's two children, Matthew, five, and Alice, two, has been a problem. Inner-city schools are a mixed bag. However, they recently learnt that Matthew qualifies for a place at St Paul's Cathedral Pre-Prep School. "We find it a fascinating and historic place to live," says David. "London is an incredibly pressurised place where you're swept along in the tide of business. It's not a great

place for spiritual life – you have to carve it out. So it's important to have a presence here."

For Christine Adams, the pace of life is about to change as her husband, the Rev Tony Graff, a Methodist minister, takes up his new appointment on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent. They are swapping their spacious Edwardian home in south London for a five-bedroom, 1960s chalet bungalow in a quiet street 10 minutes' walk from the beach. "The advantage of living in a church house is that you don't have all the hassle of buying and selling when you move," says Christine. "But if you're dead set on having a certain type of house, you aren't going to get it. You just have to make the most of what you're given."

The Methodist Church provides a house with carpets, curtains and a cooker and will pay for redecoration if required. The regulation study is also equipped with a desk, bookshelves and a wastepaper bin.

"We've bought a lot of our own furniture on the basis that we always thought we'd live in a reasonable-sized house," says Christine. "However, their 'daughters' bedroom furniture will be too big to fit into the bungalow's smaller 'children's rooms' instead, the girls will share one of the larger bedrooms. Are Tony and Christine a little apprehensive

at leaving the city behind after eight years? "Yes. We'll be more reliant on the car, but it's only a few minutes to the park instead of 20 and the walk to school will be much quieter."

The Anglican Church has a greater stock of property, often held in great affection by parishioners because of historical associations or architectural interest. Millions of pounds have been made available for the renewal and improvement of these houses and, where appropriate, the Church Commissioners will give permission for large or unsuitable vicarages to be sold on the open market by auction, tender or private treaty.

The Church of Scotland has probably some of the most attractive manses in idyllic locations, many of which have become surplus to needs in recent times. A manse was recently sold on the Inner Hebridean island of Colonsay, set in two acres of woodland overlooking the sea and the hills of Jura and Islay.

New to the market this week is St Leonard's Manse, a large Victorian property within a conservation area in St Andrews with proximity to the coast and the town's famous golf courses. The main house has four bedrooms and an annex set in mature grounds. A stable block suitable for conversion to residential use is also for sale. Offers over £295,000 are invited, but conditions of the sale state that the word "manse" must not be used in the name of the house and it must never be used for betting, gambling or the sale of alcohol.

Details of St Leonard's Manse: 0131-225 5722

Whether you're an inner-city vicar or a Highland minister, the house you live in will have come with the job. By Fiona Brandhorst

Philip Meech

A touch of glass

A well built conservatory can be an extra room all year.

By Robert Liebman

A little bit of sunlight goes a long way toward making a conservatory scalding, even on mild summer days. Conservatories are heat traps. Victorian glasshouses were designed for plants and, being relatively tall, were easily and efficiently ventilated. Many of today's conservatories are supposed to be for people but are squat rather than tall, and their blinds and windows provide inadequate ventilation and temperature control.

"People don't realise how hot conservatories get in summer," says Mark Brinkley, author of *The Housebuilder's Bible*, "and they build one as if a conservatory is just a different sort of extension. It isn't. It is very specialised. For occasional use it is great. It is not a mainstream room."

Glass is more expensive than traditional building materials for walls and roofs, and their high proportion of glass also makes conservatories more costly to heat. "Many people choose not to use their conservatory when it is too hot or cold or dark, but that is an awful lot of time for a room that was expensive to build," Mr Brinkley observes. "Only about 1 per cent of new homes are built with conservatories, which are much more expensive than an ordinary extension." Light-loving self-builders prefer integral sun rooms to bolt-on conservatories.

But a well-designed and solidly constructed conservatory can easily be a mainstream room 12 months a year. "Be clear how you intend to use it," says John Sturdy, a partner in Lee Evans de Moulbray, chartered architects. "A conservatory can be little more than a greenhouse, which is an agricultural glazed structure primarily for growing plants, or a triple-glazed garden room whose environment is completely different from a greenhouse. Double glazing allows spring and autumn use, and triple glazing is for year round."

The trend is away from the all-glass conservatory of popular imagination. "If you limit the amount of glass, you limit the heat loss. You could have a glazed end with a conventional roof." Cutting down on glass also reduces material costs.

Mr Sturdy recently designed a conservatory for a Kent couple, David and Patricia, who live in the coach house they recently renovated. Much of the original brickwork has been retained, either for regulatory reasons or like the entire rear wall, for privacy.

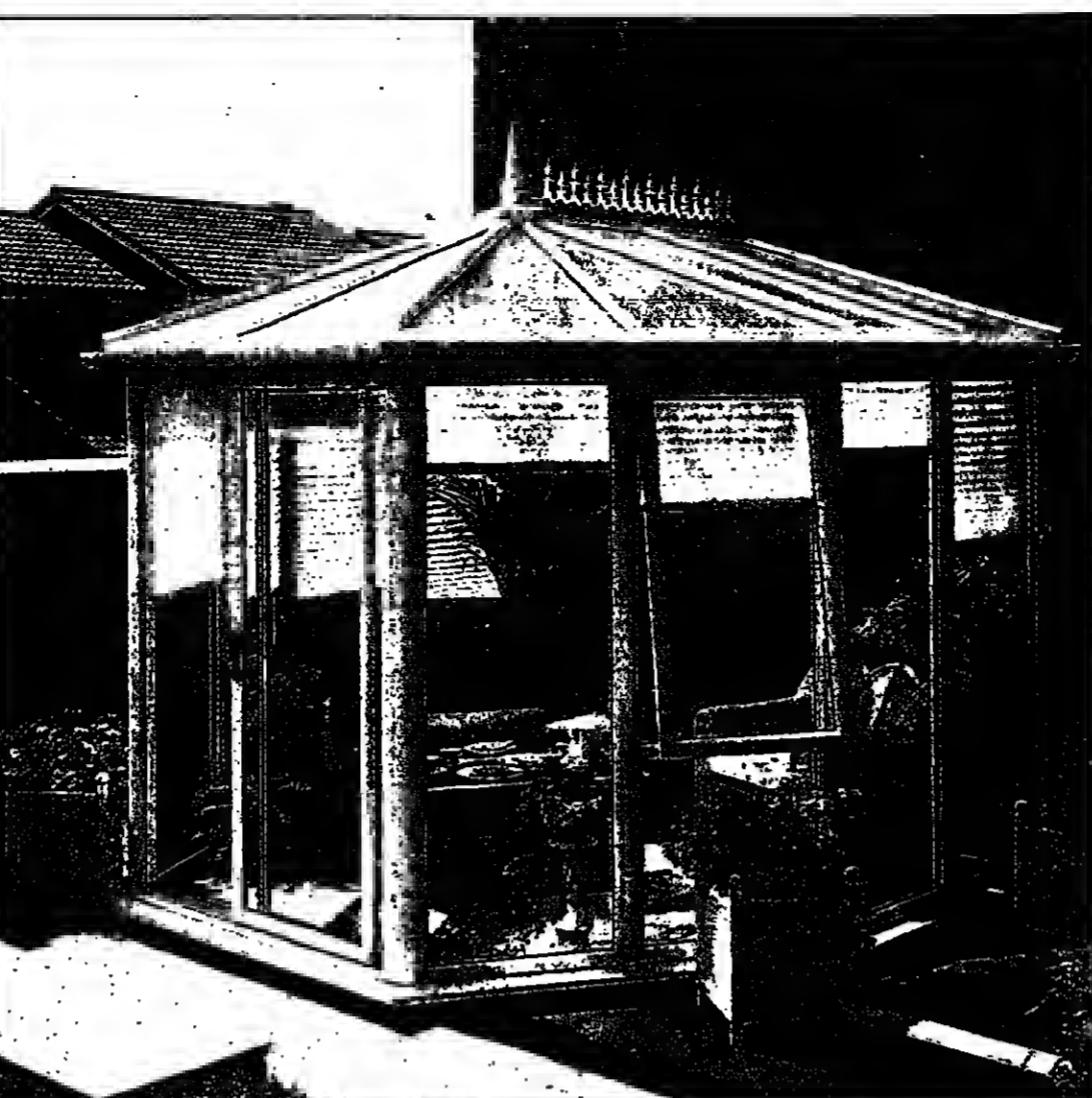
But brick and plaster definitely had to make way for glass: "The whole point of a conservatory is that it is not an extension. You get a completely different feel in it than in the rest of the house. An extension, even one with a lot of windows, is not the same thing," Patricia explains.

Their conservatory has under-floor heating, which is space-saving as well as energy-efficient, and low-emissivity reflective glass that minimises solar gain in summer and has excellent heat retention in winter. Seemingly expensive items such as Pilkington K glass tend to pay for themselves in the long term.

Summer is garden time. "A conservatory is not for the summer," Patricia says, but "summer" and "British summer" are distinct concepts. "We used the conservatory on Christmas Eve. We also used it a few weeks ago when we had a barbecue, and it suddenly became windy and chilly so we popped inside the conservatory. It was pleasantly warm."

Wickes supplies conservatories in 20 styles and 300 sizes, starting at £1,000 for a lean-to and rising to between £5,000 and 16,000 for more substantial and traditional-looking styles. All use "double glazed toughened safety glass" and are designed for DIYers. Construction costs are not included in the price.

Far more expensive are conservatories from the likes of Andega, BAC and family firms such as Frost



A well designed conservatory can be a mainstream room 12 months a year

& Co; the Conservatory Association has a comprehensive list. A high-specification conservatory similar in size (15ft by 12ft) and materials to Patricia and David's would cost £35,000-£40,000.

Charles Frost says that his high-spec conservatories cost about £140 per square foot. A top-end conservatory can easily cost three or four times more than a Wickes conservatory of equivalent size.

The additional money buys superior design and materials. Your extra costs cover, among other things, different kinds of safety glass: laminated for the roof and toughened for walls. "Laminated glass breaks more easily but retains

the object that broke the glass. Toughened glass is better for walls because if a person were to break it, the glass would fall to the floor in chunks, not shards, which would cut them," Mr Frost explains.

"Ideally, a conservatory should face east or west, but you can make up for too much or too little heat by heating, ventilation and protection," says Janice Hennessey of Elkins Surveyors. In other words, conservatories that face in the other directions are feasible but more expensive.

"If you sell immediately, you probably will not recover your full development costs. You can maximise value by ensuring appropriate de-

sign and size proportions and that your garden really is large enough to support a conservatory."

Check references wisely when choosing a company. "Ask to see a conservatory they built some years ago," Ms Hennessey says. "This will give you some idea of how their work ages. Also check that any guarantee is insurance-backed in case they go out of business."

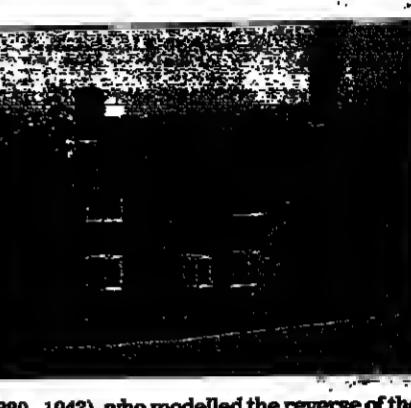
Conservatory Association: 0171 207 5873; Elkins Surveyors: 01322 626700; Frost & Co: 01767 640 808; The Housebuilder's Bible costs £18 including p&p from: 01223 290230; Lee Evans de Moulbray: 01227 784 444

THREE TO VIEW WITH ESTABLISHED GARDENS

CLUMPS COTTAGE in Odham, Hampshire, has large, well-stocked cottage gardens, with masses of rambling roses and tubs of lavender and pelargoniums, and is screened from view by well-established hedges and trees. The two-bedroom house is set off a small lane in a semi-rural spot, a mile from the town centre. It has a 25ft sitting room which looks out over front and rear gardens, a separate dining room and a large country kitchen. Outside, there is a five-bar gate entrance, parking area and timber outbuildings. £25,000 through Hill & Morrison (01256 702892).



THREE CHIMNEYS, near Pulborough in West Sussex, has large, well-stocked gardens which include a splendid white American poplar tree, tall hedging for privacy, flower beds and several varieties of clematis. The Grade II listed, three-bedroom house used to be home to George Kruger Gray (1880-1943), who modelled the reverse of the George Medal, among others. In the grounds is the 30ft-long barn which he used as his studio. The house dates from 1620 and has a 21ft sitting room with open fireplace and bookshelves, a 14ft study with beamed ceiling, and a dining room which is in the oldest part of the house, with oak beams and windows engraved by Gray. Guide price is £225,000 through Jackson-Stops (01730 812357).



LONES HOLE in Shaford, Essex, is a Grade II listed, two-bedroom cottage with a particularly attractive garden. A five-bar gate guards the entrance, there is a stream flowing through the one and a half acre grounds, there are large lawns leading to the River Pant and its water plants and a wooded area with mown grass paths. There's also a wild area with silver birch, wild roses and plum and apple trees. The property comes with a greenhouse, summer house and aviary, garage and workshop. Offers around £220,000 through Trembath Welch (01371 872117).



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Modern apartments in a Docklands development with a terrace and balcony. Some also available with water views.

1 bed from £74,995*
2 beds from £89,995*
Mill Quay, Spindrift Avenue (off Westferry Road), Isle of Dogs. 0171 536 9556

Stylish apartments moments from the town's amenities, adjacent to Cricklewood BR for an 11 minute commute to Kings Cross. 1 bed from £84,000*
2 beds from £101,000*
Somerton Gardens, Claremont Road (off A407), Cricklewood. 0181 830 5311

ISLE OF DOGS
5% DEPOSIT PAID

Luxury apartments in a Docklands development with a terrace and balcony. Some also available with water views.

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Mill Quay, Spindrift Avenue (off Westferry Road), Isle of Dogs. 0171 536 9556

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DAGENHAM
PART EXCHANGE†

Charming 3 bed homes with spacious lounge/diner, nestled in a relaxed residential setting.

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PARK HOUSE

Luxury 3 bedroom Victorian townhouse conversions overlooking Wandsworth Common, with separate self-contained basement apartment.

Number 3 Parkhouse, £215,000
Parkhouse, Wandsworth Common. For an appointment to view call 0181 877 0171

WANDSWORTH

Peaceful apartments in desirable Wandsworth, adjacent to Wandsworth Common and only ½ mile to the station for a 7 minute journey into London.

1 bed from £94,995
2 beds from £121,995
Windmill Green, Windmill Road, off Trinity Road, Wandsworth. 0181 877 0171

LEWISHAM
5% DEPOSIT PAID

Desirable apartments situated in the vibrant heart of Lewisham, moments from the BR station for an easy commute.

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Cortington Place, Armbury Way (Right from station, off Trinity Road via Leman Hill Road), Lewisham. 0181 694 1133

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Luxurious 2 bed, 2 bath apartments some overlooking the common, complete with fitted kitchen.

1 bed from £120,000
Heritage Park, Church Lane (off Tooting Bec Road), Tooting, London SW12. 0181 682 0561

WOOLWICH
LEGAL AND SURVEY FEES PAID

Family townhouses complete with fitted kitchen and integral garage, situated on a new development on the bank of the Thames.

3 beds from £93,995
4 beds from £131,995
King Henry's Wharf, Church Street (off A206), Woolwich. 0181 855 4811

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5% DEPOSIT PAID

- ideal for buyers who have not yet saved sufficient for their deposit.

PART EXCHANGE:

- allows you to move immediately without worrying about selling your existing home.

MOVE IN FREE:

- perfect deal for first time buyers where Fairview pay for your survey, legal fees and deposit.

LEGAL AND SURVEY FEES PAID

- extra help for those moving on, saving you money to spend on your new home.

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